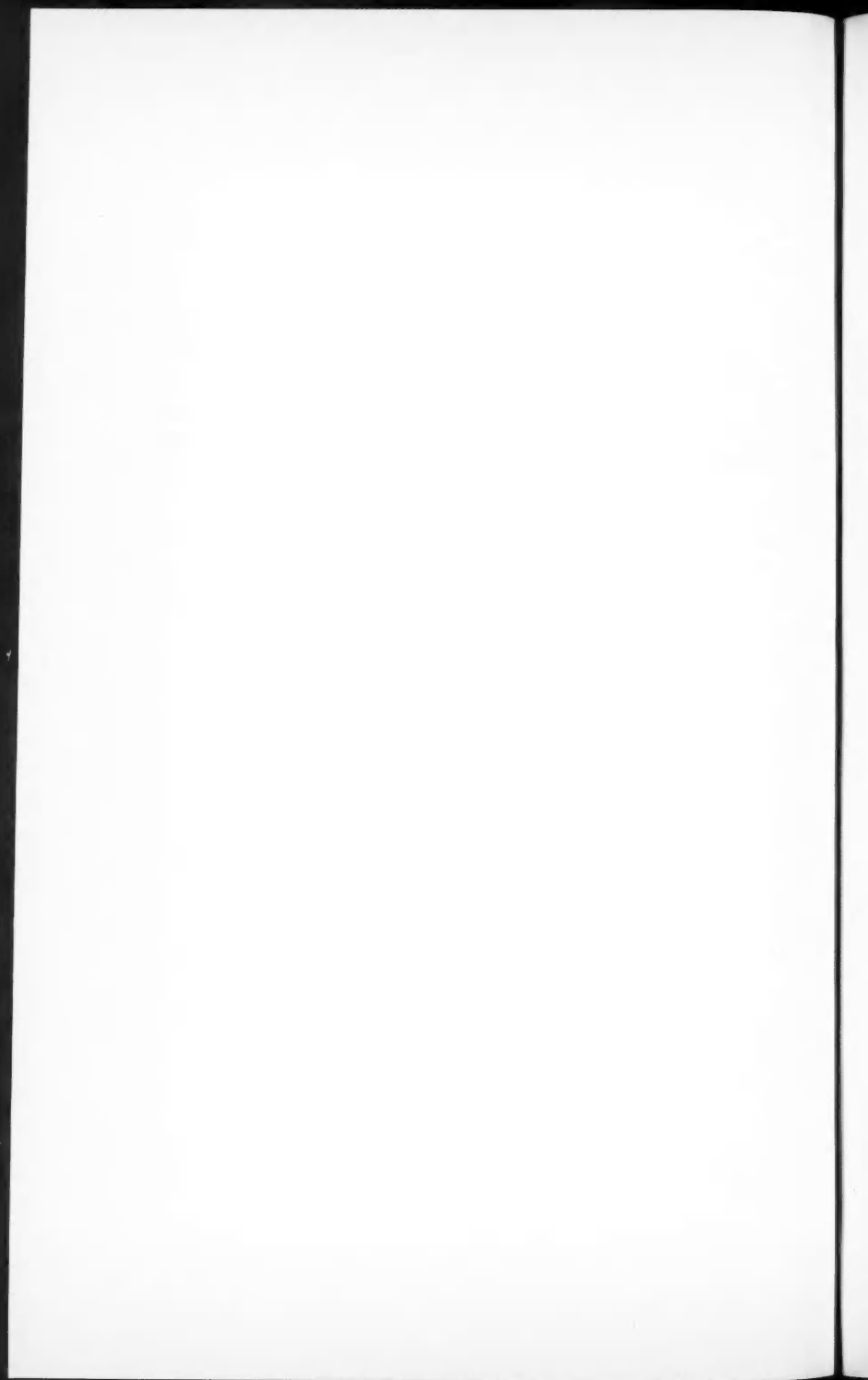


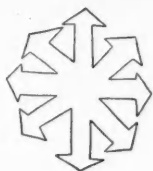
# **diogenes**



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The English language edition of *Diogenes* is published quarterly in December, March, June and September by the University of Chicago Press, 5750 Ellis Avenue, Chicago 37, Ill. Entered as second-class matter at the Post Office, Chicago, Ill.

Business correspondence should be addressed to the University of Chicago Press.

Editorial correspondence should be addressed to Roger Caillois, Editor, International Council for Philosophy and Humanistic Studies, 19 Avenue Kléber, Paris 16<sup>e</sup>, France.

Six parallel editions of the review are published simultaneously:

English: Published and distributed in the United States by the University of Chicago Press. Price \$1.00. By subscription (4 numbers): \$4.00.

French: Published by Librairie Gallimard, Paris.

Spanish: Published by Editorial Sudamericana, Buenos Aires, Argentina.

German: Published by Kiepenheuer und Witsch, Cologne.

Italian: Published by Fratelli Bocca Editori, Rome.

Arabian: Published by the Maison Egyptienne d'Edition, Alexandria, Egypt.

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Printed in the U.S.A. at the University of Chicago Press, Chicago 37, Ill.



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Winter, 1955

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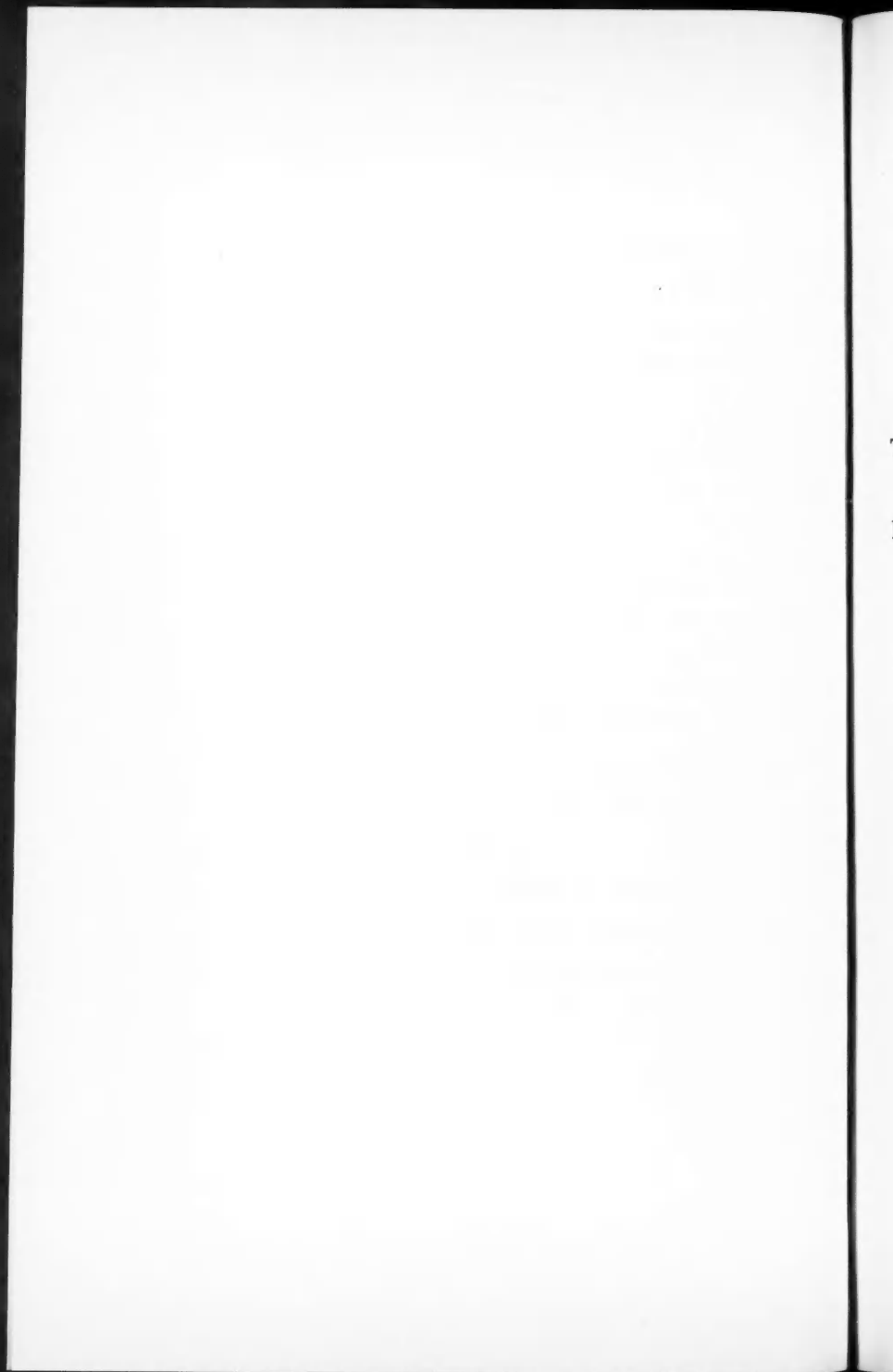
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## THE LITERATURE OF PRIMITIVE PEOPLES

### I

To speak of oral narratives or song-poems, particularly those of primitive peoples, as constituting true literature has until recently met with the greatest suspicion not only from the general public but from students of literature and, indeed, from most ethnologists as well. Their objections are basically of two kinds. No literature is possible, they contend, without writing, and the languages spoken by primitive peoples are inadequate both in vocabulary and the range of ideas which can be expressed in them to permit the development of what we call true literature. Both of these contentions are, I feel, quite incorrect. One has only to read such studies as those of F. Boas<sup>1</sup> and Edward Sapir<sup>2</sup> to realize on how slight a basis of fact such statements rest. There is no need, consequently, to spend any time refuting the theories of philosophers like Lévy-Bruhl<sup>3</sup> or E. Cassirer<sup>4</sup>

1. *Handbook of American Indian Languages*, Bull. 40 (Wash., D.C., Bureau of American Ethnology, 1911-1935).

2. *Language: an introduction to the study of speech* (New York, Harcourt Brace, 1921).

3. *Les fonctions mentales dans les sociétés inférieures* (5th ed., Paris, 1922), pp. 151-257. Eng. ed.: *How natives think* (London, Allen & Unwin, 1926).

4. *Philosophie der symbolischen Formen*. Vol. I, *Die Sprache* (Berlin, 1923). Eng. ed.: *The philosophy of symbolic forms* (New Haven, Yale University Press, 1953).

### *The Literature of Primitive Peoples*

concerning the structure of primitive languages. The only thing that can be said in defense of their generalizations is that, given the manner in which many of the recorders of these languages presented their data and the many loose statements they made, it is easy to see how Lévy-Bruhl and Cassirer and those who were influenced by them arrived at their unsound generalizations. The first objection, particularly, that without writing no substantial literature can possibly develop, will, I am certain, be adequately disproved by the examples of prose and poetry which I am presenting in this essay.

The absence of writing does, however, entail a number of consequences for the forms which certain types of compositions assume and upon one of these I would like to comment. I am referring particularly to traditional prose narratives. These can best be understood if we regard them as dramas in which the reciter, the *raconteur*, impersonates the various characters of the tale or novelette he is narrating. His role as an actor is here more important than his role as transmitter of a specific traditional text, for it is by his skill and excellence as an actor that his audience judges him. His personality, his temperamental make-up, his style, in consequence, play a determining role. He may interpolate or omit, amplify or shorten, reorganize or reinterpret to an amazing degree without encountering any serious criticism as long as what is regarded as the basic core of the plot is not affected. These interpolations are rarely creations of his own, but consist of traditionally fixed episodes, themes, motifs, imagery, epithets. Interpolations of one kind or another, let me point out, have always been the privilege of actors. We find them in the classical drama of ancient Greece, in that of the Golden Age in Spain and in that of the Elizabethan Age. They are found even today, especially in comedy. An oral dramatic text is never as fixed as one which is primarily to be read.

We thus come to one of the essential problems of all traditional oral narratives. Does a fixed text in our sense of the term exist? The answer must be in the negative. The reasons for this are many, the two most important being that, first, the community demands of the author-*raconteur* fixity only for the basic plot and secondly that the actions and behavior of the figures in the plot are always supposed to be intelligible to a contemporary audience. This means that a text is being continually reedited. Under such circumstances one would expect considerable confusion in the structure of these narratives, which is indeed frequently true. However, accomplished narrators succeed in integrating their material with amazing skill although rarely is this integration perfect.

Where the raconteur-actor-editor plays so all-dominating a role one might very well ask what is left for the audience. Does it, like the audience at our theatre, simply listen and pass judgment on the skill of the raconteur-actor? It does all this and more. Strange as it may seem to us, an audience in an aboriginal tribe is far better prepared to understand the implications of their literature than we often are of our own. Every person there—parts of Africa and Polynesia-Micronesia perhaps excepted—has an all-embracing knowledge of his culture and participates in every aspect of it; every person has a complete knowledge of his language. There are no "illiterate" nor ignorant individuals. An audience thus comes prepared esthetically, culturally, and critically, to listen to a narrative in a manner that can only be compared to an Athenian audience of the fifth century B.C.—on a different level, of course.

I have so far spoken primarily of the imaginative traditional prose narratives where, strictly speaking, there are no authors but only rearrangers, reinterpreters and editors. But there exist in each tribe, in addition to these traditional narratives which can be said to constitute the classical literature, other narratives constituting the contemporary literature, which have true authors and where the themes are taken from the life of the community and from personal events in the life of an individual. These two types of narrative differ fundamentally in subject-matter, in diction, and, at times, in vocabulary. In many tribes, especially in North America, they have special designations. Unfortunately ethnologists have neglected the contemporary because they have so largely concentrated their attention upon the classical and sacred literatures. However there is also a marked tendency for native priests, medicinemen, and tribal dignitaries, from whom, after all, most of our material is obtained, to place the contemporary literature in a lower category.

In these contemporary narratives, of course, much depends upon the skill and artistry of the author. Although he generally follows the style or styles laid down by older literary traditions he can also embark on experiments and attempt to create new styles. Such new styles are often due to contacts with other tribes. Here we have some controls. The recent contact with white investigators, for instance, has led to the emergence of a number of new literary categories. I am thinking particularly of autobiographies and the descriptions of the various aspects of culture, especially of religion and ritual. These never existed before the coming of the ethnologists. It is therefore of great significance for the history of primitive literatures to determine the degree to which the new categories and styles

### *The Literature of Primitive Peoples*

resemble the older ones. It is also of unusual interest for the student of comparative literature to realize that within less than two generations American Indians have developed the technique for composing well-rounded autobiographies which compare more than favorably with those of the ancient Greeks and Romans and can, indeed, stand comparison with some of the best in our own cultures. *The Autobiography of a Winnebago Indian*<sup>5</sup> which I collected some years ago can very well take its place by the side of that of so consummate a master as Benvenuto Cellini.

In poetry the text, likewise, is not fixed, except for the larger epics of the Polynesians and some of the Malayan tribes and, generally, for religious chants as a whole. Naturally poems are composed in traditional forms, but within these forms the composer is permitted absolute freedom to a far greater extent, in fact, than even in the contemporary prose narratives. He can use any image he wishes and he can be as personal in his allusions as he desires to be. One of the difficulties of understanding many short poems, particularly those of the American Indians, is that they are often so personal as to be unintelligible without a commentary.

There are thus both varying texts and unalterably fixed texts among primitive peoples, although unquestionably fixity of text is not regarded as a virtue, as it has come to be in Western European civilizations, particularly during the last two centuries. We cannot emphasize too strongly the fact that the excellence of a literature has nothing to do with the number of fixed texts found in it. If I seem to overstress this point, that is because it has at times been contended that where there is so great a variability for a given narrative no possibility for the development of a significant literature exists.

We come now to the last of the basic questions to be clarified before we can turn to our specific task, the characterization of some of the main aboriginal literatures. How is an author-raconteur trained? How does he learn his art? And how does one compose a poem in the absence of writing, and, what is far more important, in the absence of privacy? Be it remembered that privacy can hardly be said to exist in aboriginal communities.

The first question is easily answered. A raconteur learns his art directly from an elder, generally a relative. Such training may take a long time and it is always expensive. As a result only those individuals who have real talent and ambition persevere. However, the recital of narratives is not

5. P. Radin (Berkeley, University of California Publications in American Archeology & Ethnology, 1920), Vol. 16, pp. 381-473.



confined to specially trained individuals. Many persons know a few traditional narratives, own them, in fact, and can often tell these few as well as the "professional" raconteur. No training certainly is required for the recital of the contemporary narratives. In the Americas, in fact, and in most areas where no caste systems or markedly developed class organizations exist, there actually are no true special groups or guilds of professional raconteurs, i.e., individuals who spend a considerable part of their time at such a task. This is quite different in many portions of Africa, Polynesia, and certain parts of the Southwest Pacific. There we find well-organized guilds of professional raconteurs who alone know the narratives and have the right to tell them.

The second of our questions is more difficult to answer, not only because of the nature of the subject but because we have little information to fall back upon. Moreover it is complicated by the additional fact that most poems are enclosed in a musical framework. We know enough about the interrelationship of this musical framework to the words to state that sometimes the music is primary, sometimes the words, the exact nature of the relationship often being dependent upon the poet and his inspiration. I see no reason for believing, however, that, by and large, the situation encountered here with regard to the interrelationship between words and music is very much different from what existed in the case of the Greek lyric poets or what held for the choruses of the Greek dramas of antiquity. We are possibly also dealing here with meters, although this is still problematical.

There is often a native theory of inspiration. Among most American Indian tribes poems are supposed to come to individuals in dreams, dreams here meaning that they have come more or less unsought. An Eskimo named Orpingalik, known for his poetical gifts, gave the great Danish ethnologist, Knud Rasmussen, a well-thought-out theory of inspiration that leaves little unsaid on the subject. "Songs (poems) are thoughts,"<sup>6</sup> he told Rasmussen, "sung out with the breath when people are moved by great forces and ordinary speech no longer suffices. Man is moved just like the ice floe sailing here and there out in the current. His thoughts are driven by a flowing force when he feels joy, when he feels fear, when he feels sorrow. Thoughts can wash over him like a flood, making his breath come in gasps and his heart throb. Something like an abatement in the weather will keep him thawed up. And then it will happen that we, who

6. *The Netsilik Eskimos*, Report on Fifth Thule Expedition (Copenhagen, 1931), Vol. VIII, p. 321.

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always think we are small, will feel still smaller. And we will fear to use words. But it will happen that the words we need will come of themselves. When the words we want to use shoot up of themselves—we get a new song.”

Similar in strain is the explanation of how songs are composed which was given Rasmussen by the Greenland Eskimo Kilimé. “All songs come to man when he is alone in the great solitude. They come to him in the wake of tears, of tears that spring from the deep recesses of the heart or they come to him suddenly accompanied by joy and laughter which wells up within us, we know not how, as we ponder upon life and look out upon the wonders of the world around us.

“Then, without our volition, without our knowledge, words come to us in song that do not belong to everyday speech. They come to us with every breath we take and become the property of those who possess the skill to weave them together for others.”<sup>7</sup>

This is, of course, pure theory and tells only half of the story. The other part consists of the arduous labor required for fitting the words into their proper frame, and knowledge of the traditional rules, of the stereotyped images, and formulae. All this our Eskimos Orpingalik and Kilimé must have known, for their poems conform strictly to the rules, but this they forgot to tell us. Other less philosophically inclined poets fortunately give us a better clue as to how they go about the task of composing a poem. On the island of Buin in the Solomon Islands, for instance, there are professional poets who, according to Thurnwald,<sup>8</sup> all compose in the same way. A man goes into the forest to be undisturbed, selects a melody and then attempts to fit words to it. He will test these words repeatedly until he is satisfied that they conform to the rhythms of the melody. But to judge from the numerous song-poems Thurnwald has published this again is only half of the explanation and represents the portion that our Eskimo poets omitted. Poetic inspiration plays as great a role here as everywhere else. The professional poets of Buin are, after all, selected for their special gifts. That they often are commissioned to compose a poem for a particular occasion and are even told to include certain details, is of secondary importance. So was Pindar commissioned. As poets they wish to appeal to the listener's emotions and this they will do by striking imagery, by

7. *Grönlandsagen* (Berlin, 1922), p. 229. Translated from the German. Cf. his *The Eagle's Gift* (New York, 1932), pp. 8 ff.

8. R. C. Thurnwald, *Profane Literature of Buin* (New Haven, Yale University Publications in Anthropology, 1936), pp. 3-15.

mythical allusions, by a special language and a special phrasing. The rhythmical units of the melody which Thurnwald emphasizes so strongly are pushed into the background. In short, our Buin poet's description of how he composes possesses no more validity than did that of the Eskimos Orpingalik and Kilimé.

In parts of Africa we find a description of the technique for composing song-poems strictly analogous to that given by the Buin. For example, among the Ila and Thonga of southeastern Africa there exists a class of song called *Impango*, sung only by women on any occasion when people gather together, at work, at a so-called beer-drink, in preparation for a journey, etc. There are in each village a number of women who are well-reputed composers of the music for such songs. Should a woman want such a song composed she first selects a subject for it and then the words. The words may be in praise of her husband, of her lover or of herself and will be connected with certain specific events such, for instance, as her husband's prowess in killing some fierce animal. She will then have some provisional melody accompany her words. With these she goes to the music-composer and sings the first half dozen words. The music expert, having ascertained whether, for instance, she wishes her song to start on a low or a high tone, then composes a few phrases of music which will conform to the first phrase as sung to her by the composer of the words. Then the music expert sets to work and composes the music for the whole song.

Yet here again the poems belie the theory. No fitting of words simply for the purpose of having them conform to the rhythm of a melody could possibly produce poems like the two following from the *Fan of the Congo*.

#### DIRGE ON THE DEATH OF A FATHER<sup>9</sup>

Father, my father, why have you left your hearth?  
O father, did someone strike you down?  
Someone whom vengeance demand that you slay?  
And now your ghost has wandered to the other shore.

Father, my father, why have you left your hearth?  
Though the skies have cleared, our vision is obscured.  
From the trees the water falls in measured drops;  
The rat has left his hole.

9. Translated from the French. Cf. Blaise Cendrars, *Anthologie Nègre* (Paris, 1947), p. 24.

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Behold our father's home!  
Gather the grass for his grave  
And spread it now here, now there.  
Things once invisible he now can see.

SONG TO THE FIRE-GOBLIN<sup>10</sup>

I

Fire seen only at night,  
The deep night;  
Fire which burns without heat  
And shines without burning;  
Friendless, knowing no home and no hearth,  
Bodiless, yet you fly.  
Transparent fire of the palms,  
Fearless, I ask for your aid.

II

Sorcerer's fire! Tell me  
Who was your father, who was your mother?  
Where do they dwell?  
But, indeed, you are your father, you your mother!  
You go your way and we see no mark.  
Dry woods have not given you birth,  
No ashes did you give to mankind.  
Though you die yet you know not death!  
Tell me, are you some wandering soul  
That has taken your form unaware?

III

Sorcerer's fire!  
O spirit of waters below, of the air overhead!  
Light that shines from afar  
Fly that illumines the marsh  
Bird without wings, form without body,  
Essence of fire, hear!  
Fearless I ask for your aid.

Despite the fact that professional poets functioning very much as described for the Buin are to be found in many portions of the aboriginal

10. P. H. Trilles, "Les légendes des Bena Kanioka et le Folklore Bantou" in *Anthropos* (Vienna, 1909), Vol. IV, p. 965. Translated from the French.

world, the composing of poems is definitely not an art confined to them alone. In all primitive civilizations there are occasions when every person will attempt to compose a poem. We find accordingly, many individuals in every tribe who have composed at least one or two. To do so some special skill and certainly special knowledge were required. Naturally when thousands of poems are composed in one generation few will have great merit, either from our point of view or from that of primitive peoples. Yet it is quite surprising how good some of these are from any point of view. Let me give a few examples from North America, composed by individuals who were not professional poets, to show the nature of their subject-matter, the technical knowledge which was required of the composer, and what a listener had to know in order to understand the allusions contained in them and to appreciate the meaning of the imagery, free and stereotyped.

I

ESKIMO<sup>11</sup>

The white hounds of dawn I see approaching.  
Away, away, or I will yoke you to my sleigh!

This is a poem composed by an Eskimo woman as she lay dying and fighting death. Both these lines are well known stereotyped images, one for death, the other for life.

II

TLINGIT<sup>12</sup>

Drifting along toward the shore runs the nation's canoe,  
With it my uncle. He is destroyed.  
Never again can I expect to see him here.  
To him it has happened just as to Kashkatkl and his brothers.  
They waded out across the Stikine.  
Their sister, disobeying, looked at them  
And they became stone.

To understand this poem one has to know an episode in a well known myth. *Nation's canoe* means an important chief; *to become stone* signifies being drowned.

11. Unpublished.

12. J. R. Swanton, *Tlingit Myths and Texts* (Wash., D.C., Bureau of American Ethnology, Bull. 39, 1909), p. 410.

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III

TLINGIT<sup>13</sup>

Would that I were like her who was helped by Taxgwas!  
If I were like the one he helped, that woman,  
Indeed I could build my brother's house anew!  
But he, my brother, I fear, has gone into the trail of the sun.  
And that never again I will see him.

This song was composed by a woman about her drowned brother, Taxgwas. The first two lines refer to some incident in his life; the last three are stereotyped poetical formulae.

IV

WINNEBAGO<sup>14</sup>

I, even I, shall die some day.  
Of what value is it then to be alive?

This is a poem composed by an Indian after a day of drinking and debauchery. It subsequently became a favorite drinking song.

V

OJIBWA<sup>15</sup>

1.

A loon I thought it was,  
Yet it was my love's splashing oar.

2.

To Saulte Ste Marie he has departed.  
My love, he has gone before me  
And never again will I see him.

VI

OJIBWA<sup>16</sup>

As my eyes search the prairie  
I feel the summer in the spring.

13. *Ibid.*, p. 411.

14. P. Radin, *op. cit.*, p. 423.

15. F. Densmore, *Chippewa Music II* (Wash., D.C., Bureau of American Ethnology, Bull. 53), p. 129.

16. *Ibid.*, p. 254.

VII

OJIBWA<sup>17</sup>

The odor of death, the odor of death,  
I smell the odor of death  
In front of my body.

VIII

TLINGIT<sup>18</sup>

If one had control of death,  
Very easy it would be  
To die with a Wolf Woman.  
It would be very pleasant.

Let me compare a poem by an extremely gifted Eskimo with these poems by amateurs.

1.

A wonderful occupation<sup>19</sup>  
Making songs!  
But all too often they  
Are failures.

2.

A wonderful fate  
Getting wishes fulfilled!  
But all too often they  
Slip past.

3.

A wonderful occupation  
Hunting caribou!  
But all too rarely we  
Excel at it  
So that we stand  
Like a bright flame  
Over the plain.

17. *Ibid.*, p. 83.

18. J. R. Swanton, *op. cit.*, p. 415.

19. K. Rasmussen, *op. cit.* in n. 6, p. 511.

## *The Literature of Primitive Peoples*

From this brief discussion one fact assuredly emerges clearly: that the conditions for the development of true literatures among primitive peoples exist in abundance. There are creative artists; there exist highly developed literary forms for both prose and poetry, and there exists a mature and educated audience. How varied these literatures can be, how in each area special literary styles and literary forms have arisen so that we can legitimately speak of an African literature, for instance, as set off against a Polynesian, Melanesian, North American Indian or Eskimo literature, how within each area, indeed, within each tribe, multiple styles exist, I shall now attempt to demonstrate, although I shall limit myself primarily to the African and Eskimo literatures.

## II

Most of the older students of primitive cultures and, unfortunately, not a few of the more recent ones, have always tacitly assumed that aboriginal societies had no history or at least that they possessed no significant historical sequences. As these were a thousand or more years ago, so, essentially, they are today, or were until the appearance of the white man. Nothing could be more erroneous. The civilizations of few sections of the aboriginal world can be understood unless we realize that contacts with other tribes and other cultures took place long before the influence of the great European and African-Asiatic civilizations was ever felt. With these contacts must have come about numerous changes. In fact, indications of such cultural transformations, sometimes slight, sometimes profound, are clearly discernible. With the recognition of this fact—that all aboriginal civilizations have had a long history with periods of stability alternating with periods of crisis and change, and with periods of isolation followed by periods of contact—we must begin. Otherwise it will be impossible to understand why one area or one tribe has developed one type of literature, and another a second type, and what has brought about the special physiognomies of the various literatures. I do not, of course, mean that the specific traits of a given culture are to be regarded simply as a function of such changes. Other factors of equal and, at times, far greater importance must also be taken into consideration, such as the physical environment, the degree of culture integration achieved, and specific events occurring within each tribe. Bearing this in mind, let us now attempt our characterization of primitive literatures. I shall confine myself to just two such literatures, referring to the others only incidentally. I am selecting



for comment those of Negro Africa and of the Eskimo because of the contrast they offer.

By Negro Africa I mean, roughly speaking, Africa south of the Sahara, always excepting the Bushmen. Its traditional imaginative prose literature is set off sharply in form and content from that of all other areas. Nowhere else, for example, do we find anything remotely approaching the sophistication which we encounter here. Nowhere else do we find man and human relations depicted with such stark realism. How are we to account for it? Explanations in terms of race or climate are out of the question. It must be the reflection of a particular social milieu, and here an understanding of the history of Negro Africa is vital. Rarely, in any area, have there been such frequent impingements of cultures upon one another, cultures often differing fundamentally in type and complexity. Moreover, nowhere in the aboriginal world were there so many crises, so much shifting of population, so much chaos and confusion. It is during the breakdown of a culture, in periods of transition, that man tends to be sophisticated, realistic, cynical, and sceptical and that certain aspects of the creative imagination find no expression. In Africa, for instance, it would seem that the mythopoeic imagination, using this term here in its broadest sense, is apparently no longer permitted to function freely, at least in the traditional narratives, and that where it does persist it has been given a new, essentially rationalistic, dress. To indicate what I mean by this statement let me compare the following short narratives, one from the Ojibwa of Ontario,<sup>20</sup> Canada, and the other from the West African Ekoi:<sup>21</sup>

# I

Once an old man said to his children, "In two days he is going to pass, the white animal." The children were very glad that they were going to see this animal and one of them asked his father, "Father, is this the animal who brings the morning?" And the father answered, "Yes. After a while you will hear him coming along and singing."

So within two days' time he told his children, "Remember, today you will hear him just before dawn. Look! Look! He is coming now."

"*Awihih, awihih.*" Thus he passed along toward the west singing and it was morning.

20. P. Radin, manuscript.

21. P. A. Talbot, *In the Shadow of the Bush* (London, 1912).

II

Mouse goes everywhere. Through rich men's houses she creeps and she visits even the poorest. At night, with her bright little eyes, she watches the doing of secret things, and no treasure chamber is so safe but she can tunnel through and see what is hidden.

In olden days she wove a story child from all that she saw and to each of these she gave a gown of different color—white, red, blue or black. The stories became her children and lived in her house and served her because she had no children of her own.

Comment here is just as unnecessary as it is when we contrast the conventional opening of many Ojibwa narratives, "Once my story lived," with the conventional beginning of those of the Ashanti, "We really do not mean, we really do not mean that what we are going to say is true."

Two utterly distinct and different cultural and literary traditions are involved here. To say that in the first case we are dealing with a simple, undifferentiated culture where man is still completely under the sway of his dream life and his fantasies, as quite a number of scholars, notably psychoanalysts, would contend, is belied by the facts. No such people exist. Be it also remembered that in civilizations far more complex than the Ojibwa, in most of North and South America and Polynesia, for instance, the mythopoeic imagination is still functioning in full vigor. Nor should we forget that it is found in Aeschylus and in all the great sophisticated oriental civilizations.

What has happened in Negro African cultures then, and finds its expression in their traditional prose literature, is thus only to be explained by their history and the influence of historical conditions upon their attitude toward animals, man, society, nature, and God. In my *African Folktales* narrative upon narrative brings this out clearly. Animals, nature, God, they have all been thoroughly humanized and, having been humanized, can then be assessed as man is assessed. Perhaps that is why there is no special genre devoted to satire in African literature, neither in prose nor in poetry. Man is depicted as he is. That is a sufficient satire. So likewise are animals, God, and nature depicted. They cast no shadows; they have no protecting *personae*. However only destruction and tragedy can result when man meets his fellowman, nature, and God in such fashion.

Let us examine the plots of four narratives given in *African Folktales*,<sup>22</sup>

22. *African Folk Tales* (New York, 1953).

The Bantu Bena Mukuni tale entitled *Let the Big Drum Roll*,<sup>23</sup> the Bena Mukuni *How an Unborn Child Avenged his Mother's Death*,<sup>24</sup> the Bantu Baronga *The Wonder Worker of the Plains*<sup>25</sup> and the Bantu Baila tale of *The Woman Who Went in Search of God*.<sup>26</sup> Basically there is no reason why, in the first, the king should be murdered, that in the second the husband should murder his pregnant wife, that in the third the whole tribe should be destroyed, and that in the fourth the old woman should not die. But if man insists upon approaching his fellowman, nature, and God naked, without protecting illusions or fictions, only violence can be the outcome and he is consumed and destroyed. Nor is it without significance that nowhere in any of these tales are the actors represented as penitent or aware of their crimes. Indeed it is wrong to call their actions crimes. Given the viewpoint that is reflected in these narratives, the actors are simply morally unaware.

Although themes reflecting this attitude toward man and the world are the dominant ones today, this does not mean that they always have been so. It is best, in fact, to regard the prevalence of these themes as part of a style, originally reflecting certain social conditions developed many generations ago, which has persisted in the traditional prose narratives and driven out other styles. Yet other themes and styles are still found today although they are not common. Take, for example, the Bantu Ambundu tale of *The Son of Kimanaueze* and *The Daughter of the Sun and Moon*.<sup>27</sup> That themes of this type were at one time much commoner we may safely assume. We can, in fact, still find them in many tales that have been today completely revised and reorganized in terms of the newer realistic style. This older viewpoint is also evident in many of the animal tales, particularly among the Southern Bantu.

The only respect in which the non-traditional narratives differ from those of other areas is in the development of formal semi-religious, semi-philosophical discourses such as those found in West Africa among the Ewe.<sup>28</sup> In the latter we find the same realistic appraisal of the world so characteristic of the traditional narratives. One example will have to suffice:

23. J. Torrend, *Specimens of Bantu Folklore from Northern Rhodesia* (London, 1921), pp. 24-26.

24. *African Folktales and Sculpture*, pp. 186 ff.

25. *Ibid.*, pp. 229 ff.

26. *Ibid.*, p. 305.

27. *Ibid.*, pp. 73 ff.

28. J. Spieth, *Die Ewe-Stämme* (Leipzig, 1906), pp. 834-836.

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God made everything in the world. He alone has been great from the beginning of time. God made all men. . . . God is wise for he has created everything on the earth and accompanies men and animals everywhere. . . . No person can understand his wisdom. . . . He himself made the good and the bad people. He is compassionate. But he does not always know how to act justly for he gave us death.

God acts unjustly for he made some people good and others bad. I and my companions work together in the fields; the crops of one prosper and those of others fail. This proves that God is unjust and treats men unequally. God treats us, our children and our wives who perish, unkindly. If men behave like that we say nothing, but when God acts thus it hurts us. From this we are right in inferring that God is unjust.

In the other main branches of prose literature which have attained significant development, in aboriginal Africa, the riddles and the proverbs, sophistication and realism are also dominant. The realism of the proverbs is accompanied by a profound and detached philosophic insight and understanding in which love and compassion are given their due place, something which is strikingly absent from the traditional prose narratives. Perhaps nowhere in the world has the proverb attained a more artistic expression than here in Africa. Rarely has so much been said in so concise, pithy, and artistic a form. We have today a tendency to dismiss such a literary genre with a shrug of the shoulders. That, of course, is a Western European prejudice. The proverb is still a legitimate literary form in the Orient and it was not despised in ancient Greece.

In contrast to the prose, no generalizations can be made for the poetry that would hold for the whole continent. There exist a few stylistic forms that are found everywhere, such as the poems consisting of solo and chorus or those that serve as a text for a prose expansion, or the dirges for the dead. But apart from these each area and tribe has developed its own forms and stresses themes referring to its own interests and connected with its own special history. Where monarchies exist or where societies are complexly organized the poets often constitute a professional and privileged order. They play the role of poet-laureates whose duty it is to glorify the rulers and the particular interests and ideals of their nation. Let me select the Bantu Ruanda to illustrate what these poets take as their subject matter.

Among the Ruanda there are three main genres of poetry, all of them

taking the form of odes or small epics, those in praise of the king, those in praise of the warrior and his deeds, and those in praise of their most prized possession, the cow. These odes are one of the distinctive achievements of Africa. Those in praise of the king consist of a long series of stereotyped complements, stereotyped images and allusions which only a member of the tribe could possibly understand and appreciate. As an example, let me quote part of an ode composed to celebrate the accession to the throne of the king Mutara in 1810:<sup>29</sup>

You are a vessel forged without defect,  
Fashioned by hammers, chosen and select;  
Born of Ruaniko's most sacred trees,  
Your brethren, scions of Cyillima.  
Indolence never touched you nor did sloth.  
Your arms, unfailing, brought us victory  
Just as it did your kin, Ruganda's ancient kings.

You are the happy searcher after game.  
You nourish us and grant us your protection.  
O king of great renown and without blame,  
Have we not seen the deeds where you excelled?  
A king of many virtues, hero you.  
A jewel precious are you and so large  
That from Buriza down to Buremera you stretch.

Ruler of Tanda, you, all-powerful,  
From days of old your fief it was Rutanga,  
Your ancient home Gasabo,  
There where the heifers play.  
Hero without fault and without blame,  
Giver of laws, unalterable words,  
Owner of lands that overflow with wealth,  
Master and king, your subjects here we stand  
And in Ruanda may you always rule. . . .

Equal you are to those that I have praised,  
In no way second,  
O clothed in joy and happiness!  
These drums attest your gentleness and worth.  
Young though you be, in valor you are clothed.

29. Translated from the French of the unpublished essay by A. Kagame, *La Poésie au Raunda*, kindly placed at my disposal.

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Your horns already stand erect and straight  
Despite your youth, most precious calf!  
Mighty will you become I know,  
When you have come to man's estate,  
Mighty and strong and proud, a bull.  
Great conqueror of hungers.  
Where will the nations flee,  
Those who were slow to serve you?  
Protector of our flock, lengthen this day,  
Give me your ear that I may pay respect. . . .  
I am not one who falters, whom slander finds;  
Others may hesitate, this well I know, not I.

Pleasure and happiness reside within my breast  
Since that rare day when to your home I came.  
Giver of joy, our refuge,  
Turn upon us the fulness of your power.  
And now a happy message do I bring,  
I who did find the chambers of our lord,  
That gracious home, radiant and full of smiles,  
Immaculate and clean as kaoline.  
There did I see and come upon the king,  
In semblance like a newly risen moon,  
His features like a diamond without flaw.  
Resplendent did his beauty flash on me  
And there came a new afflatus added to the old.  
Upon my head a garland there was placed.  
And thus I danced crowned with the sacred badge,  
Nor can the best of bards find me at fault.

Here we are in a world comparable to that of Pindar, a world in which heroic lays and odes are born, as the well-known French scholar, Père Laydevant, has justly pointed out.<sup>30</sup> The poetic inspiration found in these odes is not generally of the highest kind. Negro African poetry at its best is to be found elsewhere, in the elegies for the dead, in the religious "hymns," and in the short philosophic lyrics. Take, for example, the following "hymns" from the upper Guinea coast.<sup>31</sup>

30. "La Poésie chez les Basuto," *Africa*, Vol. III (London, 1930), pp. 523-535.

31. D. Westermann, "Gottesvorstellungen in Oberguinea," *Africa*, Vol. I, pp. 195, 204. Translated from the German.

# I

## 1.

The sun shines brightly, it burns down upon us.  
In glory rises the moon, rises into the skies.  
Rain falls on earth and, changing, the sun shines upon us.  
Sun, moon and rain may change, but over them all there towers  
God, from whose eye nothing escapes and is hidden.  
Though you may stay at home, or though you may live on the waters,  
Though under darkest shade of the trees you recline  
Over it all dwells God.

## 2.

Did you think in your pride or believe an orphan was ever below you,  
You could covet his wealth and secretly then betray him,  
There would be none to behold and none to detect you?  
Call but to mind the fact that God is there, ever above you  
And in the days to come he will find and he will repay you,  
Though not today, today, though not today it may be.  
Yes, in the days to come God will find and he will repay you.  
Was in your mind the thought, was in your heart the feeling  
It is a slave I have robbed, only, indeed, an orphan?  
But in the days to come God will find and he will repay you,  
Though not today, today, though not today it may be.

# II

O Sango, you, you are the master.  
You punish in wrath, evil and guilty alike,  
And you take in your hands the stones, the fiery weapons,  
To crush those below; all these are broken.  
Fires break out, the woods burn and all is consumed.  
Trees fall, are destroyed, death threatens the living.

Or take again the following from the Ewe of West Africa:<sup>32</sup>

# I

Death has been with us from all time;  
The heavy burden long ago began.  
Not I can loose the bonds.  
Water does not refuse to dissolve

32. J. Spieth, *Die Religion der Eweer* (Göttingen, Vandenhoeck & Rupprecht, 1911), pp. 236 ff. Translated from the German.

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Even a large crystal of salt.  
And so to the world of the dead  
The good too must descend.

II

Large is the city of the nether world  
Whither kings too must go  
Nevermore to return.  
Cease then your plaint, O mother of an only child!  
Your plaint O cease, mother of an only child!  
For when did an only child  
Receive the gift of immortality?  
So be it, mother of an only child,  
And cease your wail, and cease your wail!

III

(The singers approach)

A great thing we desire to do,  
A *kposu* song, an *adzoli* song,  
To sing we shall begin:  
Awute here lies dead,  
He now lies on his bier.  
Death did announce himself to him.  
O dead friend lying on your bier  
Return once more, your bonds to loose!

(The deceased appears and speaks)

You all now know  
Within my body the word has perished,  
Within Awute speech has died.

Who was it destroyed my body?  
'Twas death dragged it away;  
A warrior snatched it from my body.

(Death appears and speaks)

Now my turn it is to sing!  
I came and thundered,  
I had my lightning flash upon the tree  
And threw him down!  
Come let us go!



Footsteps I hear, people are approaching.  
An evil brother does announce himself;  
Inopportune he comes.

With these poems I shall leave African literature and turn to one which could not possibly be more different, that of the Eskimo. Here too a stark realism pervades both prose and poetry, but there is no oversophistication and, above all, no cynicism. Nowhere is death and starvation so omnipresent, nowhere is nature so cruel and nowhere is man, possibly, so violent. What then has made for the amazing contrast between the two types of realism? The answer, I feel, is simple. Cruelty, bloodshed, destruction among the Eskimo are not palpably man-made as in Africa. No conquests, with all their attendant horrors and with the demoralization which comes in their wake, have swept over this land. No aboriginal civilization is more completely integrated. It is this integration which has protected the Eskimo against inherently false emphases and evaluations and which has permitted him to retain one virtue which is seemingly absent in the civilizations of Negro Africa and many parts of Indonesia, Malaysia and Melanesia: humility. This humility brings with it a philosophic detachment which can critically evaluate man, yet still sympathize with him even in misfortunes he has brought upon himself. The Eskimos can do this because they see man in his proper proportions as a mote in an enormous universe and as a being forced by nature and life itself to do violence to other living creatures which have as much right to life as has man.

In no area in the world, civilized or aboriginal, is there more respect for life, for all life, human and non-human, and so much unadulterated enjoyment of life. The will to live under the conditions existing in Arctic North America is an achievement and as such the Eskimos celebrate it. Only because it is something that has to be achieved can they face life, acquiesce in what it offers of good and evil, of misfortune and happiness, and only because it has to be achieved does it mean so much to them. An informant of Rasmussen tells how she came upon a woman who, when she and her family were isolated during a terrible winter, saved herself from death by consuming the dead body of her husband. When discovered, half crazed, she shrieked at her rescuers not to approach her, that she was defiled and unfit for human companionship. The answer of the rescuers was simple and direct: "You had the will to live."

But life to the Eskimo means life at its best moments: youth and maturity, not old age. Old age is a time for recalling the past when one was

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happy and active. Such reminiscences form the theme of innumerable poems. Some of them have a touch of the sentimental which a delightful sense of humor generally corrects, for on truthfulness in such matters the Eskimo lays great stress. "Our narratives," an old Eskimo told Rasmussen, "deal with the experiences of man and these experiences are not always pleasant or pretty. But it is not proper to change our stories to make them more acceptable to our ears, that is if we wish to tell the truth. Words must be the echo of what has happened and cannot be made to conform to the mood and the taste of the listener."

Let me quote one of the best of such poems:<sup>33</sup>

1.

Often I return  
To my little song.  
And patiently I hum it  
Above the fishing hole  
In the ice.  
This simple little song  
I can keep on humming,  
I, who else too quickly  
Tire when fishing—  
Up the stream.

2.

Cold blows the wind  
Where I stand on the ice,  
I am not long in giving up!  
When I get home  
With a catch that does not suffice,  
I usually say  
It was the fish  
That failed—  
Up the stream.

3.

And yet, glorious is it  
To roam  
The river's snow-soft ice  
As long as my legs care.

33. K. Rasmussen, *op. cit.* n. 6, p. 509.

Alas! My life has now glided  
Far from the wide views of the peaks  
Deep down into the vale of age—  
Up the stream.

4.

If I go hunting the land beasts,  
Or if I try to fish,  
Quickly I fall to my knees,  
Stricken with faintness.  
Never again shall I feel  
The wildness of strength,  
When on an errand I go over the land  
From my house and those I provide for—  
Up the stream.

5.

A worn-out man, that's all,  
A fisher, who ever without luck  
Makes holes in river or lake ice  
Where no trout will bite.

6.

But life itself is still  
So full of goading excitement!  
I alone,  
I have only my song,  
Though it too is slipping from me.

7.

For I am merely  
Quite an ordinary hunter,  
Who never inherited song  
From the twittering birds of the sky.

In the traditional prose narratives purely human themes greatly predominate. These are really novelettes and are probably not very old. But the Eskimo places them in the category of narratives referring to events of the ancient past, to which also the comparatively few animal tales belong. They are often difficult to distinguish from narratives that belong to the second category, that of contemporary literature. However, the most char-

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acteristic compositions in their contemporary literature belong to the domain of their shamanistic experiences. They are really snatches of autobiography.

Yet, excellent as is their prose, the real achievement of the Eskimo lies in the realm of poetry. Here they have not been equalled by any other aboriginal people, with the possible exception of the Polynesians. That they should have as their subject matter the joy of living and the beauties of the world is not strange considering the nature of Eskimo philosophy.

All primitive peoples celebrate the happenings of their life, important or unimportant, in song, but such technical perfection as that of the Eskimo has been achieved by few others. This is manifest in every composition. Take, for example, the following poems:

#### I<sup>34</sup>

I arise from rest with movements swift  
As the beat of a raven's wings,  
Thus I arise  
To meet the day.  
My face is risen from the dark of night  
To gaze at the dawn of day  
Now whitening in the sky.

#### II<sup>35</sup>

The lands around my dwelling  
Are more beautiful  
From the day  
When it is given to me to see  
Faces I have never seen before.  
All is more beautiful,  
All is more beautiful,  
And life is thankfulness.  
These guests of mine  
Make my house grand.

34. K. Rasmussen, *Intellectual Culture of the Iglood Eskimos*, Report on Fifth Thule Expedition, Vol. VII (Copenhagen, 1929), p. 27.

35. *Ibid.*, p. 47.

### III<sup>36</sup>

Ajaha, ajaha!  
 I journeyed in my kayak  
 To search for some land.  
 Ajaha, ajaha!  
 And I came upon a snowdrift  
 As it began to melt,  
 Ajahaija, ajaha!  
 Spring now I knew was near,  
 Winter was past.  
 Ajahaija, ajahaija!  
 And I was afraid  
 That my eyes would become  
 Weak, far too weak  
 To behold all that glory.  
 Ajahaija,  
 Ajahaija,  
 Ajaha.

### IV<sup>37</sup>

#### 1.

Fear seizes me  
 When I think of being alone.  
 What a wish, to be far from men  
 As happy one sits among friends!

#### 2.

What a joy it is to sense,  
 To witness summer's approach  
 As it comes to this world of ours;  
 To behold the sun,  
 The day-sun, the night-sun,  
 Going its ancient way!

36. K. Rasmussen, *Grönlandsagen*, text-translated into German by J. Koppel (Berlin, 1922), p. 238. Translated from the German.

37. K. Rasmussen, *Rasmussen's Thulefahrt*, translated into German by F. Sieburg (Copenhagen, 1926), p. 430. Translated from the German.

3.

Fear seizes me  
When I mark the winter's approach  
As it comes to this world of ours;  
To behold the moon,  
The half moon, the full moon,  
Going its ancient way!

4.

Whither does all this tend?  
Would that my steps went eastward!  
Yes, never again, well I know,  
Will I see him, my father's kin.

The Eskimos have a large number of special genres of poetry, the most famous being the versified lampoon. On specified occasions men and women assemble to hear individuals, generally gifted poets, hurl insults at one another. These versified lampoons are highly stylized and very difficult to understand because they deal with incidents in the personal lives of the combatants. Such poetic duels can be quite long, lasting at times an hour. They consist of attacks and answers. In many of these poems it is regarded as artistic to compose in riddles, or only to give hints without stating clearly what is meant. The audience is thus kept in a continuous state of tension, although rarely for long, since among the Eskimo everyone's affairs are matters of community knowledge.

Let me quote snatches from one such poetic duel<sup>38</sup> where the meaning is clear. The contest is between a man named Marratse and one named Equerqo, who had stolen Marratse's wife.

#### MARRATSE'S ATTACK

Words let me split,  
Small words, sharp words,  
Like the splinters  
Which, with my axe, I cut up.  
A song I shall sing of old days,  
A breath from the distant past,  
A sad and a plaintive song,  
Forgetfulness to bring to my wife,

38. *Ibid.*, pp. 235-236. Translated from the German.

She who was snatched from me  
By a prattler, a liar.  
Bitterly has she suffered from him,  
That lover of human flesh,  
Cannibal, miscreant,  
Spewed up from starvation days!

#### EQUERQO'S ANSWER

Only amazement I feel  
At your preposterous words.  
Only anger they cause  
And the urge to laugh,  
You with your mocking song,  
Placing on me that guilt.  
Did you think you could frighten me,  
I who many a time challenged death?  
Hei, hei! So you sing to my wife  
Who once was yours in the days  
When kindness you forgot.  
Alone she was in those days.  
Yet never in combats of song  
Did you challenge your foes for her.  
Ah, but now she is mine.  
Never again shall false lovers like you,  
Deceivers, come singing into our tent.

Eskimo poetry is exclusively lyrical, but within that genre what has been achieved is amazing. Equally amazing is the Eskimo's awareness of their technique. As one of them once said, "The most festive of all things is joy in beautiful, smooth words and one's ability to express them."<sup>39</sup> It is not by chance, then, but because they have occupied themselves with the problem, that they attempt to explain what poetic inspiration is. I have already given one such explanation; let me now add another. "All songs," so an old Eskimo claimed, "come to us in the great solitary open places. Sometimes they come to us in the form of tears, at other times from the depths of our hearts or, again, they may come in the form of joyous laughter springing from the happiness which wells up within us as we behold the grandeur of the world and ponder over the meaning of life.

39. K. Rasmussen, *The Eagle's Gift*.

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Without our knowing how, words and melodies come into being, words we do not use in common speech."<sup>40</sup>

How are we to account for this amazing literary achievement? It is an important question to answer. A highly developed literary tradition must lie behind it, and we have difficulty, at first, in believing it was achieved in the inhospitable and frightful environment in which the Eskimo now lives. Is it conceivable, as they themselves claim, that song and laughter was the answer they gave to the challenge of nature? Possibly. But this is only part of the answer. To explain the Eskimo literary achievement, to completely explain the literary achievement of any aboriginal civilization, we must assume that all peoples, at all times, carry within them the possibilities of developing significant and mature literatures if social and economic conditions are not too destructive. Only on such an assumption can we explain the song cycles of the Australian aborigines of Northeastern Arnhem Land, cycles that are true epics—this song, for instance, that a "lowly" Australian poet sings:<sup>41</sup>

Tidal waters flowing,  
White foam on the waves,  
Fresh water flowing,  
From rains into the stream.  
Into the waters falling,  
Soft bark of the papertrees,  
Rain from the clouds falling,  
The stream's waters swirling—  
Thus she emerged  
And walked upon the land.

40. K. Rasmussen, *Grönlandsagen*, p. 230. Translated from the German.

41. R. M. Berndt, *Kunapipi* (Melbourne, Cheshire, 1951), p. vii.



## GOOD SENSE OR PHILOSOPHY

It would be both impudent and imprudent to speak of good sense in relation to philosophy without first of all mentioning Descartes and giving his remarks on the subject. Impudent because we would be depriving a great man of the homage which is his by right and by virtue of long possession; imprudent because we would be depriving ourselves of an opportunity to define our terms exactly. Another equally legitimate motive lies in the fact that if we were to pass over it in silence, someone would be sure to compare our text with the one we quote herewith:

"Good sense," says Descartes—and the *Discourse on Method* opens with these words—"is the most equally distributed thing in the world: for everybody thinks himself so abundantly provided with it that even those most difficult to satisfy in everything else do not usually desire more of this quality than they already possess. In this it is unlikely that they are mistaken; the conviction seems rather to support the view that the power of good judgment and of distinguishing the true from the false, which is properly called good sense or reason, is by nature equal in all men; and hence the diversity of our opinions comes not from the fact that some are more rational than others, but solely from the fact that we conduct our thoughts along different channels, and do not all consider the same things. For to possess good mental powers is not enough: the prime requisite is to apply them well."

Translated by James G. Labadie.

### *Good Sense or Philosophy*

Thus for Descartes good sense is reason, considered as a power or, to employ a term that is more modern because further removed from the underlying Aristotelianism of Descartes, as a faculty of the soul. And this good sense is present as a faculty in every man; without it, the individual would no longer be a man in the full meaning of the word. Of course the words of Descartes are not entirely without irony, and it would be a mistake to attribute to him the opinion that this ubiquitous faculty is in every man to the same degree efficient, present *actu*. Nevertheless *good sense or reason*, this single faculty with two names is the same in each of us, and differences of degree are due not to the gift itself, but to the use we make of it.

It is obvious why Descartes takes the position he does and remains faithful, as he himself says, to "the common opinion of philosophers": how could he hope to convince men of the unique and universal—unique *because* universal—value of his method if men, all men, were not able to understand it, to accept it, and to follow it? And how could he have opposed the whole tradition on so many points, if his light ran the risk of being dimmer than the light residing in the great men of the past? He declares, therefore, that we have only to turn good sense or reason in the right direction, direct it toward truly desirable ends, for humanity to be able to profit safely, at last, from the fruits of the tree of knowledge, cultivated, finally, with expedience.

But can anyone imagine a more abstract, a more "philosophical" view of man and of good sense? What good is this faculty of distinguishing the true from the false which is so easily misled? Who, then, awaited Descartes in order to be put on the right track? Is our security so much greater since Descartes than before his time? Have discussions lost any of their bitterness? Our own good sense, protesting, does not appear identical with that of Cartesian good sense "according to the common opinion of philosophers." It is a different good sense which guides us, and which guided our ancestors and those of Descartes, and it did not guide them so badly after all, since their way of living and doing things made it possible for us to be born—and for Descartes to become a philosopher.

It would be wrong to draw the conclusion that Descartes was ignorant of or misunderstood this other good sense. All of his provisional code of conduct, his whole life prove the opposite; and besides, he refers expressly to this other good sense when he speaks of the way of life of "sensible men." But the good sense of sensible men never becomes, to use a current expression, *thematic* for him: his philosophy presupposes it, but is not con-

cerned with it. Now it is precisely the relation between philosophy and this good sense of sensible men with which we are concerned—and so the Cartesian thesis appears as a philosophical thesis, and our good sense declares his definition good, as Descartes would have said, for discussion in “the school”—good, as we would say, for examination questions.

What then is this good sense we are talking about? This is not an easy question to answer, for good sense does not define itself: it leaves this task to the philosophers. It has no need of definitions, it knows, and questions only make it suspicious. The man of good sense has no need of lengthy reflection in order to orient himself in the world; aided by his instinct (to employ the word in an eminently human context), he easily distinguishes, not the true from the false, but the sensible from the senseless—and it is senseless in the highest degree to ask endless questions, because then one misses the moment of action, weakens the instinct, falls into the most trifling sort of speculation, and analyzes what should not be analyzed if one wishes to understand what life and the world are all about.

Consequently we find ourselves faced with a seemingly insurmountable difficulty. To understand good sense is the business of a philosopher; but the business of philosophers is outside the domain of good sense, in the judgment of this very good sense whose authority we cannot challenge. Could we still pretend to be speaking of it if it no longer recognized itself in our portrayal? But if we yield to good sense, we must still explain the existence of philosophy and philosophers—and this we are incapable of doing. Good sense is that which orients men in the world and in life; without good sense life would be impossible; therefore the philosopher must be born of the man of good sense, who refuses to become a philosopher, and must remain, at least to some degree, a man of good sense in order to survive. Good sense declines to accept philosophy, philosophy cannot speak in the name of good sense and cannot even recognize that without it there would be no philosophy.

Good sense, we have said, knows what life and the world are all about. The man of good sense declares that he knows what he must do to be successful, what leads to success in the world as it is.<sup>1</sup> The philosopher recoils before this statement; he wants to know what this “success” is. If

1. Good sense thus forms a system, but a system which is always taken for granted and never analyzes itself. It is with this meaning of a system of orientation that we use the expression “good sense” throughout this article, avoiding another meaning, more typical of the language of good sense but which we will rarely encounter in the course of our reflection, which refers to good sense in the individual, the degree of his knowledge of the rules, the values, and the methods of the system of good sense.

success is obtaining the result aimed for, is this result, or was it ever, desirable? To be rich, to enjoy good health or the consideration of one's fellow-citizens, is this *the Good*? Have men possessing all these things never been unhappy? Must we not first seek to know what the Good is, before racing headlong toward ends which may be deceptive? Good sense, it must be admitted, will scarcely be troubled by these arguments; it won't even bother to refute them: doubtless, men are quite easily mistaken about their own true interests; but that proves just one thing, namely, that good sense is the most *unequally* distributed thing in the world, since it is through a lack of good sense that men are misled. To have good sense is, precisely, not to be misled. The philosopher lacks good sense, and in speaking of his doubts and hesitations he admits it. As long as good sense is active, nothing and nobody will make it doubt itself: it acts, it knows that it acts, it knows what it wants, it is ordinarily successful and whatever is not normal, the extraordinary or the tragic, does not interest it. These things happen, but not as a general rule, and good sense is concerned with the normal case.

Now it is by no means sure that good sense is always content to stop at this point; often enough we find it speaking a "philosophical" language. Its natural language is an active one—there is no question of the true and the false, but of the effective and the ineffective; an instrumental one—which leads to success either in dealings with men or in relation to external nature. Occasionally a difficulty arises, capable of shaking the most firmly rooted good sense, from the observation that good sense is not the same thing everywhere in the world. It is true that good sense everywhere knows what to do and how to do it, what counts and how to achieve it; but *everywhere* here means *in every case*, not *in the same way*. Often this fact creates no problem—those who behave differently from us are barbarians, fools, and sinners; they lack good sense. But it also happens that these barbarians, fools, and sinners succeed, sometimes even at our expense. Since they succeed, and since success is the criterion of good sense, we discover that our good sense was not so good after all. Of course, if we remain faithful to good sense we will be able to profit from the lesson: we admit that the good sense of others was the really good one, and we adopt that which brought victory to those of whom we were mistakenly contemptuous. But this is a difficult decision to make and even more difficult to carry out. People do not willingly admit defeat nor can they be sure that the victor will receive them as an equal, enjoying the right to share his good sense, his way of doing things, and especially the advantages gained through his own particular good sense. If our victors do not admit

us into their community, if they fail to recognize us as their equals but treat us like beasts, would it not be too painful to grant them the possession of true good sense? We will therefore say that we have been fooled somewhere along the line but that we cannot have been totally wrong, since we have survived up to this point and have not lived too badly. It is now in our interest to pass from the level where different kinds of good sense struggle with each other to another level, where it will be possible to judge concurrent claims with the aid of some criterion other than that of success. This move is good sense, too.

It is under such conditions that good sense begins to move. No longer sure of itself, it asks questions which it wants to answer in a way that is applicable to everybody. Now to look for what is applicable to everybody, i.e., for a *true* discourse, is to engage in philosophy: philosophy has always affirmed this and here it is philosophy's testimony that counts. The true discourse we are concerned with is one lacking that contradiction which causes good sense to suffer in a world where each human group gives to good sense a content different from that attributed to it by other groups.

To bring this enterprise to the right conclusion is less difficult than it at first appears. If the truth of the discourse is conditional upon its not contradicting itself, it will suffice to rid familiar discourse of the contradictions it contains. I can start, therefore, with that good sense which, in its concrete form, characterizes my community, and by a process of elimination I shall reach something perfectly coherent. I will no doubt be obliged to sacrifice a great deal, to renounce a good part of what I have regarded as solid and useful knowledge; but I will be sure of what I am doing, and if the rest of humanity does not choose to recognize the value of the belief I have established, I shall at least have gained the right to scorn those who, since they do not think correctly, do not really think at all.

Now it is exactly at this point that the conflict between good sense and philosophy breaks out. Good sense is not particularly fond of contradictions; it would prefer to be freed from them since contradiction implies insecurity, and I cannot be sure of myself if two mutually exclusive aims, two irreconcilable procedures, are offered to my choice without my being able to base my decision on an argument resolving this competition in favor of one or the other. But good sense rebels when one proposes that it get rid of contradiction by eliminating everything that permits it to orient itself in the world and in life. It will always be on the side of Diogenes who, far from refuting the Eleates with another discourse,

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calmly walks before their eyes to show them that movement exists. No matter how full of contradiction the argument may be, good sense does not admit the denial of movement nor does it contemplate waiting for a satisfactory explanation, that is, one made according to the conventions of noncontradictory discourse. It prefers to accept the movement of men and of things, even if this means renouncing the idea of speaking about movement theoretically.

It is interesting, but not surprising, to observe that philosophers have always been preoccupied with this conflict. Good sense prefers contradiction if noncontradiction comes at such a price, and it laughs at both philosophy and at its own conflict with it, being angered, if ever, only when it observes young men whose collaboration would be so desirable for the business at hand being turned aside by philosophers from the serious matters of the world and of life. For the philosopher the problem is more serious. First, he risks a great deal in angering good sense, and martyrdom isn't necessarily his vocation; next, and this is perhaps more serious, he is led to admit that he has not obtained the intellectual security he was looking for: his discourse is without contradiction in itself, but it *is* in contradiction with all the discourses of all men living in the world, acting, orienting themselves, moving in full contradiction and yet in the most coherent way from their own point of view. This point of view shows the philosopher how much he has sacrificed on the altar of noncontradiction. It reveals to him what he, like the rest of mankind, is obliged to call everyday reality, in which one loves and hates, struggles and comes to agreement, strives and rests—reality in which one is moved although movement constitutes the worst of all contradictions; in which one is born, becomes, and dies, although becoming is the thing least comprehensible to a non-contradictory discourse. Worse than this and as if this were not disturbing enough, it is within himself that the philosopher discovers this frightful contradiction between contradiction and noncontradiction, for he himself lives and loves and becomes and moves without letting himself be stopped by his own *first concept*, which reduces the entire content of his life as an individual and as a member of a community to a contradiction and an absurdity.

With the aid of this observation it would be possible to draw up a scheme for the history of philosophy which would be no worse than any other. Thought, born of failure, seeks truth by opposing the very concept of success as defined by the particular tradition of a human group: it invents a unique principle and, starting from this, constructs a coherent dis-

course—what we call a system; it eliminates everything that cannot be deduced from its own principle as nonessential, bad, dangerous, incomprehensible, false; it is aided in this by a method which guarantees the unity of the discourse. But when the principle has been found and developed, the philosopher (not usually the same individual historically, but rather a disciple or an adversary-disciple) observes that his argument is in contradiction with life: therefore he will modify his method, or keep the method while changing the principle, or try to replace both; he will admit that the objections raised by good sense are valid, perhaps not in form—good sense doesn't express itself properly—but in substance, which the philosopher knows how to discover and which is always the same. The philosopher will say that he had been too *theoretical* and that he hadn't given due attention to the practical side of life, and thus he returns to the job of constructing a discourse which will satisfy the exigencies of philosophy and of good sense.

For the moment we shall refrain from asking whether such crises of philosophy are recurrent, like those of tertiary fever which terminates only with the life of the patient. What matters to us is the observation that every revolution in philosophy has begun with an appeal to good sense. From Socrates to Husserl and our own time, philosophers have regularly declared that their predecessors lacked a sense of reality: the discourse of the predecessor is without internal contradiction, or can at least be made perfectly coherent by reconstruction, but it doesn't make sense because it is at odds with good sense, with life, with whatever the philosopher must admit as valid if he wishes to remain a man among men. He will say that the previous principle was one-sided; it was not false, for what it taught did correspond to something in reality—so much so that one is perfectly able to understand how its author reached a given point—but because historic good sense itself had acted and especially had spoken as if such-and-such an aspect of reality was negligible, it went down to defeat. But the philosopher, attentive only to this neglected aspect, finishes by seeing nothing else and subordinating everything to the solution (or the elimination) of the difficulty which he had been the first to notice and to name. Let us but re-establish the balance, let us concentrate our efforts on the (we might say opposite) principle, and we place ourselves in direct opposition to our predecessors, doing, thus, the same thing they did, but in the opposite direction.

Let us not think, however, that nothing came out of the history of philosophy except twenty-five centuries of a simple back-and-forth

oscillation. Philosophy has evolved considerably—and good sense has too, perhaps even more considerably and more profoundly. Every failure of a one-sided principle has meant progress in philosophical reflection, and if there has been an oscillation, its amplitude has constantly increased and the extreme points reached have been each time on a higher plane. As for good sense, it learned early the practical value, the “good-sense” value, of the coherent discourse concerned with reality, and it has not hesitated to profit from this knowledge. Perhaps it doesn’t owe this knowledge entirely to philosophy, but it would have been unable to develop it without the aid of philosophy—without that absence of good sense which freed good sense in its concrete form of the chains of that form itself; philosophy taught good sense new possibilities outside the customary ones, and without the abstract, one-sided, *absurd* view (as good sense calls it) of philosophy, good sense would still be right where it started. Without Pythagoras, Parmenides, Plato, and Leibnitz there would be no differential calculus, without differential calculus no modern technique and no progress, as today’s good sense uses the term.

There is no doubt that we have progressed in the direction of good sense. We have learned to see ourselves as we are, limited individuals in a world whose details and whose aspects are never entirely disclosed to us, endlessly engaged in seeking and in finding. In other words, we have learned and understood that every truth in life and for life is *our* truth and subject to whatever we are subject to. We have become empiricists, to use textbook terminology, and while we grant to reason a value and a validity not deduced from sensory experience, and declare that sensory experience cannot be understood without reason, that reason makes a coherent experience out of these data, even here we do not admit an absolute knowledge, the knowledge of a Reason which may be substance and force outside our own experience.

But it is to be feared that this *rapprochement* which we have effected in the direction of good sense may still not suffice and that philosophers will remain men with one-sided and exaggerated theses, even though they seek contact with good sense. Their empiricism may go much further, even to the most radical skepticism, and we will have dogmatism again: is it not in the highest degree dogmatic to declare that we can know nothing? Can a thesis more contrary to good sense be imagined? Worse than this, we have only to make a *thesis* of good sense, and we succumb to the same danger. What could be more reasonable, more in conformity with good sense than to ask first of all what these words mean? Would this not be a



guarantee against straying from the path of good sense? May we not be sure that both human questions and human answers are couched in the language of men? Will good sense not become the principle of philosophy as soon as we leave behind all these senseless speculations which hinge on pseudo-problems born of an improper use of language? Will we not necessarily succeed in our search for a discourse at one and the same time noncontradictory and perfectly adapted to life if we simply turn the language of everyday life toward noncontradiction? No doubt we will succeed, but neither better nor worse than our predecessors. For we shall have to sacrifice everything that prevents noncontradiction from becoming established, and we may arrive—to choose an example which is surely not envisioned—at a definition of the State which would not differ essentially from that of any sporting club and according to which one might leave the State as one leaves his club, the difference being *solely* one of degree in that the only way to leave the State is to commit suicide: a thesis which may be coherent but which is eminently scandalous in the eyes of good sense. It might certainly be maintained that this thesis which calls itself one of good sense is somewhat metaphysical: does it not presuppose that only individuals of every-day experience are “real” and that every complex formation must be reduced to one at which you can point a finger? But that is exactly the thesis of good sense—only taken seriously, developed to its ultimate consequences and transformed as a calm conviction, such as it was in the theoretic thesis, of the exclusive type which states “there is only. . .” We are tempted to say that there is no escape from dogmatism once philosophy appears, once we attempt to speak seriously in accordance with the truth, to develop a discourse which is not self-contradictory and does not seek first of all to be effective.

Must philosophy be abandoned? Must we once again pin our hopes on good sense? Everything seems to favor an affirmative answer to these questions, but a doubt remains. Just what have we been doing throughout the above reflections? We have been speaking from the point of view of good sense, but have we spoken the language of good sense? Of this we are less sure. For good sense lives and acts, it does not speak with an eye to truth and from the point of view of truth—and this is precisely what we have been trying to do. We have tried to judge philosophy; but to judge philosophy is a philosophical undertaking: good sense, as everyone including philosophers knows, is not concerned with philosophy, but it is sometimes concerned with philosophers in a way that the latter ordinarily, and justifiably, resent. It must be admitted that our anti-philosophy is still

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philosophy, and that the problem is more complicated than we had at first believed.

Good sense is the sense of the man who has his bearings in the world, in his world. The philosopher is the man who asks questions because he is not sure of his world, because he doesn't know what he should do, whether aims ordinarily pursued deserve to be pursued, whether what is taken for good is really the Good, whether what is taught and learned is true. We may say that good sense is active, the philosopher reflective.

But it may be that this opposition is less clear-cut in reality than it is in the argument of the philosopher. We have already stated: the philosopher wants to live too, and he would be unable to live if every decision had to await the discovery of truth and of the link between the current problem and the principle of truth; he lives like everybody else, content to behave as others do, and only in the quiet of his study or during discussions in market-place or forum does he reflect and doubt everything.

But looking at it more closely, is good sense in a more favorable situation? Haven't we been speaking as if there was but *one* good sense? True, we noted variations of content, but did we take them seriously enough? Is *good sense our good sense*? Let us recall what we said earlier. There are communities, at any rate nothing prevents the existence of such communities, in which everything is regulated, where each finds his own place and where the place indicates to whoever occupies it what he must do and what he may expect from life. But these are also communities in which the problem of the opposition between good sense and philosophy is not raised: there is no place in them for even the most rudimentary philosophy, and the wisdom of such a community, through which it provides direction and content for the life of its members, does not appear as wisdom; the ethnologist and the philosopher discover this wisdom because they know of another wisdom, or rather feel a lack of wisdom and a desire for it; for those who live in the midst of wisdom, the individuals can participate to a greater or a lesser degree in truth, but truth is one, it *is*. Good sense recognizes itself as good sense when it finds itself faced with a thought which it considers as different, aberrant, mad if you will, but which exists and which permits good sense to see itself as it is concretely in opposing this thought. The good sense which struggles against reflection and philosophy is no longer this good sense in which we find a total reconciliation, or rather an absolute unity of man and his world. *Our* good sense has been to the school of philosophy and there been contaminated: it has followed the development which gave rise to philosophy, and, like

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philosophy, it has learned that one man's good sense is another man's madness, crime and sin, that the struggle of communities, although decided in certain cases, is not decided without appeal and that it is good sense not to look for the same decision everywhere and at all times. It knows that there is good in noncontradiction, that it benefits good sense, no matter what concrete form of good sense, since all forms have established contact with one another, have confronted each other, and fear the rise of conflicts among themselves. In a word, good sense too wishes to be *one*, and it calls upon philosophy even though it detests philosophy and despises each of its particular forms.

This is due to the fact that it does not wish to be *one* in the way philosophy is: the unity it seeks must be the unity of good sense. What can attaining a unity of discourse mean to good sense if the discourse no longer permits it to act? Good sense is practical, as it well knows ever since it made the acquaintance of philosophy. Now, it has also been brought to realize that philosophy can be useful to it: whoever best knows what *is*, also most often and most easily succeeds in the struggle of all men with nature and with each other, and can best use the forces of nature against those he combats or those who attack him. The question of ends does not arise for good sense, success is an end in itself; but the means of attaining success—there is a question which good sense understands and for which it is quite ready to borrow the answers from philosophy. Philosophy, as good sense readily admits, offers a fine gift, knowledge; a discourse bearing on that which *is*, but so doing from the point of view of one who would dominate, transform and utilize that which is.

Good sense is practical, and philosophy, except insofar as it attains results, is theoretical—let us rather say *theorizing*, since our good sense, thanks to philosophy, has its own theoretical side. Good sense wants to live, and live, as it says, in a proper way: the philosopher wonders what he should want to do in order to avoid contradiction between his life as a man and his discourse as a philosopher. Thus the two are truly opposed; but they cannot be separated, either: if good sense were not there to want, man would not turn to philosophy to know what he can do, what he can hope, what he should want; if philosophy did not try to answer him, man would accept the risk of failure of his good sense rather than renounce the only thing left to him, namely, the concrete form of his own particular good sense. The practical has become problematical and developed its own theories since the “good senses” of different traditions have been in combat; theory knows it is practical ever since it realized that it was born of the

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need to know in truth the aims of man, his final, indubitable, irrefutable ends, valid for each good sense. But this union, real though it is, does not bring about the disappearance of the fundamental difference. There would be no philosophy if good sense, at a given moment, had not begun to doubt: happy peoples have a history, but they have no philosophy, and what is true of peoples also holds good for epochs. There would be no good sense, or more exactly, good sense would not know itself as good sense, if it had never met men who doubt it and its values. Philosophy and good sense are inseparable only in their struggle with each other, because they exist only in that struggle.

The nature of this unity in conflict is not seen by good sense. But philosophy cannot fail to see that it is itself born of good sense, that it is, so to speak, good sense itself, but disabled, self-doubting, shaken to its roots, good sense which has lost itself, seeks itself, wishes to find itself. This very curious attitude of philosophy toward good sense is thus explained, this desire to establish an accord with good sense, to appeal to good sense in order to change from an "abstract" to a "concrete" philosophy—and at the same time is explained its undisguised hostility, its contempt for what it calls the blindness, bad will, and vulgarity of good sense and of the experience boasted by good sense. Philosophy retains its nostalgia for good sense, for this good sense in possession of the world where it feels at home, and therefore philosophy fears and detests its strayed good sense, not daring to admit, even to itself, how utterly it is lost in a reality which no longer forms a world, a cosmos, a sane unity in itself and for the men who live in it. Philosophy seeks the one true good sense to replace that which it has lost through a series of failures.

But one thing is too easily forgotten by philosophy: while it is seeking *the one* good sense of the world, the good sense of the current time is obliged to make the current world go round, the world which is not a true cosmos, in which ends are not justified in themselves, where no one feels entirely in his place, where no place is properly determined, where everything is unstable, but which is still the only world we have and which must not cease to go round if we are ever to know a better one. And as the good sense of the day is thus attending to its affairs, which are everybody's affairs, a certain philosophy comes to disturb it, to propose a final truth, a definitive solution: this truth and this solution do not concern good sense, since the difficulties with which it is occupied and pre-occupied are the difficulties of the present moment and since it lacks the time to bring about, even if it believed in them, the rule of absolute ends.

No doubt, if all men were philosophers, if no one pursued an end without being able to justify it in reason, in truth, and universally, all could relax; but given that men are as they are and act as they act, one can only take them as such and do one's best, even if this *best* be only a *least bad*. The philosopher should be grateful if the action and the activity of good sense permit him to follow his bent.

Now, if we speak as we have just been doing, it appears that philosophy *may* at least admit the role of good sense—and this is the most important difference between it and good sense: philosophy knows that without good sense it could neither last nor follow the line of development it has traced thus far, while the practical does not see clearly just how it needs the theoretical—rather, *the* theory, for it is well aware that “theories” are very useful to it. This may not seem very important. As a matter of fact, however, this difference in attitude constitutes a most profound difference between the philosopher and the man of good sense. In philosophical language—and we will not hesitate to employ it, since the whole problem exists only for philosophy—it is the difference between knowledge and self-knowledge; in other words, the difference between the man who reflects on everything except himself and his reflection, and the one whose reflection *is* reflection about himself. Hence the theoretical character of philosophy, the desire to understand the meaning of what he does, rather than to seek the means of reaching what he wishes to attain. Hence also that which constitutes the real scandal of philosophy in the eyes of good sense, namely, the suspension of value judgment, the will to find or to re-find the meaning of the world and of its existence, this refusal to take for granted and as guaranteed that which is ordinarily so taken—just like everybody else. Hence finally the scandal which philosophy sees in good sense, not because it acts, but because in acting it speaks and speaks as if it had a discourse that was coherent, sane, and well-founded, whereas in reality, good sense runs away from its own insecurity, seeks satisfaction because it is not satisfied, desires the Good but settles for goods, and refuses to be aware of its own situation: if it were satisfied, if it satisfied men, there would be no philosophy.

The day may come when good sense will no longer be troubled, when it will rule as sovereign over all humanity, when all its concrete forms will have blended together, when man will be “oriented,” will no longer have to choose among different possibilities of life, among several concrete forms of good sense, when, in other words, he will be able to engage in his sole activity, an activity which would be “taken for granted” by and

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for everybody. When that day comes, there will be no more philosophy, because there will no longer be either quest or question other than technical; there will no longer be change in the foundations of life and the fashions of doing things, and even the question of whether such a state is a good or an evil will have lost all meaning because such a question will no longer apply. But while awaiting this day, we continue to be obsessed by questions.

For us, nothing is taken for granted—an expression full of meaning, since it does indicate the real difficulty. Good sense takes everything for granted, for it knows; the philosopher takes nothing for granted, for he knows that he knows not. Language is just one among the instruments, perhaps among the organs, of good sense; it is everything for the philosopher who does not know how to act, how to speak if his discourse is to make sense, how to establish a place for himself and for every man in this world—a world in the interior of which the different “good senses” combat each other—who does know that without good sense he could not live, much less be a philosopher. He, the philosopher, can then try for adjustment with good sense, with this particular good sense in which he has himself been brought up and which cannot be too bad, since the particular world of which it is the good sense has gone on this long and shows promise of continuing to go on in the future. The problem, the philosopher says to himself, is simply to liberate good sense, this *good* good sense, from the doubts and hesitations which precipitate contradictions that in turn add to the difficulty of good sense. This good sense has been affected, we might almost say infected, by philosophy: it takes the discourse seriously, but not entirely so. Now if someone, and this someone would be a philosopher, took the discourse entirely seriously, good sense and men living in the world could live in peace: the discourse would have freed them from discourse, from the necessity of admitting that there are things which *cannot* be taken for granted. Dogmatic philosophy is born at this moment.

We have already encountered it; but it is not only here that it reveals its nature. Dogmatic philosophy is the philosophy of good sense, and like good sense, it accepts certain things as given once and for all. They are not the same things in the two cases: good sense knows what there is to be done; philosophy knows, or thinks it knows, how to answer the questions of good sense in every case where it is off the track, where it recognizes a contradiction among its values, among the procedures it considers valid, among the structures which appear to it to be fundamental or indis-

pensable. But both presuppose the same world and speak basically the same language: they don't say the same things, they don't ask the same questions, but they use the same concepts and their orientation is the same. Good sense thinks that everything is in order except for a few problems and anxieties; dogmatic philosophy declares that nothing is in order as long as these problems and anxieties are unresolved; but both have the same framework in a single world.

One has only to open any history of philosophy to see the paltry results of this philosophy of good sense—more exactly, the superabundance of nonresults of which it boasts and of which it should be accusing itself. A philosopher can always deal with the anxieties of good sense (which it transforms into questions); but his answers will be in contradiction with those given by other philosophers to this same good sense—at other times and to other forms of good sense. It is never impossible to build for good sense a world without contradiction, that is a world in which man has only to pursue his own activity; but the difficulty is that the number of such worlds is not definite and is certainly more than one: a world of safety is no less possible than a world of wealth, or beauty, or honor—but it becomes extremely difficult to live in a reality within which all these worlds confront each other, a reality of good sense thus dislocated, in which choice is necessary, and to choose an action before being able to “rest” again in well-ordered activity.

Thus the philosophy of good sense clashes most violently with that very good sense to which it was most favorable. Good sense simply does not wish to choose. It desires both worlds equally, and wants them to be able to coexist. Philosophy demands the sacrifice of all but one world, and such an offer does not interest good sense, which rejects it as an abstraction and a purely mental view. The situation is not changed at all when philosophy, realizing its situation, becomes skeptical and tries to free good sense from any feeling of bad conscience by telling it to continue, that it is doing the right thing and that its scruples are superfluous: this takes care of the philosopher, who can now consider himself in the clear because he has denied the sense of the question he knows he cannot answer; but it settles nothing for good sense, which continues to demand an answer because its difficulty is real: it sees no difference in being told to choose one possibility to the exclusion of all others, or to choose *not* to choose at all to the exclusion of all choice. What good sense wants is neither a choice nor the refusal of all choice; it wants to be shown the possibility of reconciling all the possibilities and, at the same time, to be recognized as good sense, as that

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which makes the world go round and enables men to live; it wants to be told that it did these things before there was any philosophy, and that it still does them although, according to most philosophers, they cannot be done.

So it is necessary to return to the beginning of our inquiry. And this time we must answer that philosophy *cannot* give satisfaction to good sense on the level of the latter, it *can* give good sense the satisfaction of self-respect, conceding that it *is* good sense which directs the activity of man in his life and his world. Philosophy is not, and must not become, the handmaiden of good sense, since good sense can only be troubled and interfered with when forced to listen to philosophy. It can well be the counsel of good sense, but only because the advice it gives is not on the level which properly belongs to good sense. Philosophy has nothing to do with activity, except as, first, it profits from activity, and, second, insofar as its reflection, without in the least wishing to do so, presents good sense with theories, ways of speaking (or of thinking, if this term be preferred) which can become the tools of good sense.

The first of these two relations between philosophy and good sense is not difficult to grasp: *primum vivere, deinde philosophari* expresses it perfectly. The second has caused numberless misunderstandings, the most serious of which is just that one which gives rise to what we have called the "philosophy of good sense." It is a fact that philosophy does have to do with *action*, choice, and the reconciliation of possibilities in the world where good sense is wavering; and this is why, in order to understand its problem, philosophy sees itself obliged to develop the various possibilities one by one, tracing each of them to its ultimate conclusions and to its earliest beginnings: good sense, by understanding what it seeks *basically* in either of these directions, by seeing what is implied in its techniques and how these techniques can be perfected, purified, made coherent and more effective, can profit and has always done so, since philosophy itself is a fact in the world of this good sense which gave birth to philosophy. But what is thus the essential part of philosophy for good sense (and the philosophy of good sense) is not essential for philosophy, and if philosophy is deceived on this point, it falls into the difficulties we have encountered.

Philosophy recognizes the role of good sense because philosophers are men and they know that man needs effective activity in order to live. The philosopher knows only too well that man is a creature with *work to do*—there is no expression which better describes his situation and his condition: he is in need, and his need gives him work to do. But man not only has



this work to do, he also wants to understand his need, and his work, once the work is no longer a matter of course—and this, too, the philosopher knows only too well. It is that man does not merely feel his need and fail to give himself entirely to his task: he sees the need, and performing the task should, if possible, free him from need as such, not simply satisfy this need, and that one, and so on *ad infinitum*. So man has the possibility of acting upon himself: realizing that there is no end to need, he seeks satisfaction in two opposite directions: he tells himself that he will be satisfied as well by reducing the need as by pursuing the satisfaction of needs, and that action will provide him just as much satisfaction in the world of needs as self-transformation would provide within himself; he is ready, if necessary, to renounce a great deal of what good sense considers natural satisfactions whose value is taken for granted. If he chooses the second way, that of self-transformation, he becomes a philosopher—in the philosopher's sense of the word, but also in the meaning of good sense, for which the philosopher is someone who doesn't take seriously what is done in the world, someone ridiculous or disturbing, according to the particular case. The philosopher has elected to act upon himself; he has made his choice, which consists precisely in raising the question, not of this form of activity or that, but of activity itself. For all that, he does not scorn activity, but recognizes its decisive role: he simply wonders whether he can find satisfaction in activity, in any activity whatsoever of good sense.

So philosophy is of value only to the philosopher. Good sense is perfectly right in refusing it: good sense has chosen something else, and its choice is such that it cannot understand the possibility of any other choice—it is so completely right that the philosopher, if he understands himself, also understands and approves the choice of good sense. And if the philosopher understands himself while understanding good sense, he will no longer wish to interfere in the work of good sense: each matter must be handled on its own level. But on the other hand, the philosopher knows full well that these matters are important and that he can disengage himself from them only on condition that others become engaged in them. He will admit the simple truth that the job cannot wait and that he himself is among those who need to see it accomplished. But this is also why, without interfering otherwise, he will not remain silent if he sees that the activity of the world is not adapted to the needs of the world, that it will not bring about the satisfaction that the world expects from *him*; he will often do this with much good sense—sometimes with more good sense than others, because all the action and the immanent (but invisible to good sense) meaning of

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this action are visible to him. He will intervene because he insists on the conditions necessary to his own activity, and he knows that it will no longer be possible for him to think if the world does not enjoy a certain minimum of security and calm. He turns to the activity of the world only when necessary and in case of danger, and, knowing well enough what philosophy is, he will not require the good sense of the world to expect from the philosopher the solution of the world's problems—much less will he promise a solution. He, the philosopher, will be content to point out to good sense that it is not properly stating the problems which it alone can resolve, in, and through, action.

Thus the philosopher is freed from the philosophy of good sense—as unacceptable to the man of good sense as it is dangerous for the philosopher, whom it prevents from understanding himself. But we must now bring to light what has been lying under the surface: to tell the truth, the philosopher no longer even has anything to do with action, this choice among the various "good senses" interspersed in a world where, for him at least, choice had become necessary. The choice had been inevitable; but now he has chosen, and his choice has brought him right to philosophy. Choice, without doubt, has been an act in the world, an action in the strongest sense; philosophy would never have presented itself as a possibility if the world in which it offers itself hadn't been off its hinges, if the concrete good sense of this world had been at peace with itself, if its activity had really been a matter of course. But the choice, once it is made, no longer depends on the conditions of its possibility: on the contrary, it is only the result of the choice which reveals the conditions of the choice, a comprehensible choice, but comprehensible only after it has been made and to him who made it. The philosopher has chosen to understand—not this or that according to the criteria which distinguish *this* and *that* in the framework of the world of all "good senses" and of philosophy—but to understand his understanding of this world. This is the way he answers the question of good sense; but since the question of good sense is a question only when it is addressed to the philosopher (*by* the philosopher), he answers all the questions of all "good senses" at the same time—and thus does not answer within the meaning of good sense: he answers *himself*, himself who asks the question about the meaning of good sense. This answer—if he ever finds it—will satisfy him: his need is to find the meaning of what is, and as soon as this meaning is revealed to him, by himself, he will have no more needs or have need as a philosopher; the philosopher will be satisfied in having a view of sense, in theory. But theory will not satisfy good sense.

If one wished to sum it up, it would not be incorrect to say that philosophy is *in* the world, but not *of* the world. Or, since it is perhaps better not to make philosophy the subject of any action or activity, even theoretical, we might say: the philosopher is a man in the world, a man like other men except that he takes seriously the conflict of good sense with itself, that historic conflict in which good sense has lost its bearings; the philosopher is a man who suffers from this conflict, more often and more deeply than good sense itself, a man who has decided to seek, not the satisfaction of needs, but the satisfaction of his own need. He is in the world; but the solution he seeks is not *of* this world since it is based on the very question of good sense, of every good sense in every possible world. His quest makes sense only in the world; but it is situated outside the world of activity and even outside the world of action.

Let us realize once and for all that the philosopher is not detached from the world; far from it. It is always the world, this concrete world in which he lives and searches, that interests him, preoccupies him, keeps him going. He wants to understand this world, he knows that he can find satisfaction in the comprehension of this world. The good sense of this world provides him with material and turns him toward philosophy. He knows this, and he also knows that any answer which puts his thought into conflict with the reality of good sense, and of the world of good sense, will be a false one. So he is reconciled with good sense—but not with every form of good sense: good sense may go off the track, it is necessarily off the track before philosophy can appear, and the philosopher alone recalls it to reason. But if the philosopher understands himself, he will recall good sense to the reason of good sense, not to the reason of philosophy. He will indicate to it not what the philosopher wants (which is simply to have the chance to be a philosopher) but what good sense itself wants. He will show it where the techniques it employs may be expected to lead it, he will teach it the price it must pay if it really wants to attain a given end, but he will not teach it what to choose: he will show it the necessity of choice and the possibilities among which choice must be made, telling it also that it, good sense, must itself choose. And he can give these indications because philosophy has shown him—insofar as philosophy has shown him, if you prefer—the structure of the world of men, the essential structure of all human worlds.

It is by no means certain that philosophy, even in this form, will be well received by good sense. On the contrary, it is highly improbable. Good sense wants answers within the framework of the world. It does not want answers applying to the whole of the world and to the understanding of

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this whole. It has, besides, had bad experiences with the philosophy of good sense which tried to teach good sense its own business without understanding it. Finally, good sense has no desire to become a philosopher, even in terms of a philosophy which would be theory of action and of activity, theory of the human world, theory which would contain, but well-comprehended, the multiplicity of good sense in all its contradictions: good sense feels that all this would still be theory, both beyond its comprehension and outside its scope; it feels that philosophy is proposing such comprehension as *the Good*.

So peace between philosophy and good sense will always be one-sided, if such an expression makes any sense: philosophy will agree with good sense which will never agree with philosophy, hoping for answers which philosophy could only provide by renouncing self-knowledge. The philosopher will be content with this precarious peace, since he knows that it cannot be otherwise and that every man can choose or refuse philosophy only because there exists a tension between good sense and the comprehension of the whole. He knows, therefore, that he is a philosopher by choice and that man is free to make this choice. But he will not ask good sense to recognize this freedom, which can be seen within the world of good sense only as the despair of good sense despairing of its own good sense. The only thing the philosopher will call to the attention of good sense—for all his advice can be thus summed up—is that it should arrange its world in such a way that every man *can* elect to choose theory, this view of things which is contentment in, through, and for itself, which raises man above his workaday world and permits him no longer to wish himself needful for the sole end of having, in the feeling of his need, a content for his existence. The philosopher calls to the attention of good sense its task, which is to free man sufficiently from need so that he may be enabled to choose something other than the satisfaction of his needs, so that he may have the time, quite simply, to engage in philosophy, to understand his world and himself.

So philosophy is not without usefulness for good sense: the less it leans toward utility, the more useful to good sense it will be. After all, good sense gone astray, our own good sense, that of a world which doubts its own good sense, is what produces philosophy. So it is not surprising if good sense always tries to take refuge in philosophy, but always turns away from it full of distrust. It is uneasy; but it has difficulty in seeing its uneasiness, which is hidden from it by other anxieties and the cares involved in being in need; and it would like philosophy to help it in its

tasks—philosophy has done so rather often, and good sense does not see that it did so unwillingly—but good sense does not for all that want to be directed to the source of its anxiety: it wants philosophy to provide it with a new *science*, a new *theory*, and it prefers not to understand that all *science*, even *social science*, presupposes activity, along with the anxieties and the aims of activity. Philosophy cannot cure good sense of its anxiety; all it can do is to help it face up to this anxiety. Philosophy is particularly unable to turn good sense away from its anxieties; good sense alone makes the world go round, and its anxieties belong to it alone. But philosophy can show good sense that all its anxieties are but a search for the meaning of the world, and that they are important, if good sense wishes to understand, only in relation to this last question.

Thus the conclusion will be, as is fitting when philosophy addresses good sense, an ironical one. Philosophy is good only for philosophers: but every man is a philosopher in a world which doubts its own good sense, every man who searches the meaning of his life and his world—and it would make sense for every man proceeding in this search to know what it is about, or rather, to proceed with full understanding of the problem, instead of running like a blind man in a dense forest, fleeing some terrible unknown thing.

THE MEDITERRANEAN MATRIARCHATE  
ITS PRIMORDIAL CHARACTER IN THE  
RELIGIOUS ATMOSPHERE OF THE  
PALEOLITHIC ERA

I wish to make it clear that this article will not be concerned with a general theory of the matriarchate. I have limited myself to a clearly defined cultural zone, from which I think that the hypothesis of a primitive matriarchal society cannot be rejected on the debatable grounds (recently stated<sup>1</sup>), that the matriarchate could not have been established until after the discovery of agriculture. If in fact the matriarchate cannot legitimately be separated from the divine cult of the Mother, this in itself presupposes a matriarchal constitution, not political and military save for exceptions, but based simply on feminine authority and prestige. On the other hand, ethnologists and historians of religion tell us that the great goddesses are not born of agricultural civilizations, which merely provide them with conditions particularly favorable to their development. They exist before these civilizations and are worshipped by peoples who live solely by hunt-

Translated by James G. Labadie.

1. M. Eliade, *La Terre Mère et les Hiérogamies cosmiques* (Zurich, 1954), p. 82. Cf. with p. 77 and pp. 65-66.

ing, fishing, and the rudimentary gathering of products from still virgin land.

The great mother goddesses go back thousands of years to the upper Paleolithic, whose deposits abound in representations of the "naked goddess" with sex characteristics intentionally exaggerated. Thus an inescapable and entirely natural conclusion is reached: the fact that men of the upper Paleolithic adored a great goddess who in her nudity showed herself essentially fecund indicates that they had already grasped the "divine" in their own women, projecting and exalting them in the forms and aspects of an immense and immensely powerful female who was to become the "Potnia" or "Dominating One" of the Mediterranean religious world.<sup>2</sup> Thus we see that the attitude of Paleolithic man toward his woman already engenders a primeval matriarchate, as we have just said, of privilege and prestige. From this we deduce that there is no solid foundation for the statement that the matriarchate could not be a primeval phenomenon because it could not antedate an agricultural civilization. It suffices to reflect that women themselves are at the origin of that civilization, since, for thousands of years, they constituted the mysterious and unique link between the community and the land not yet cultivated but spontaneously and inexhaustibly productive of vegetables, bushes, and plants in numberless variety; the link which expressed itself in terms of a secret and disturbing familiarity with a world inaccessible to men, placing woman in a clearly superior situation.

The inconsistency of the statement referred to becomes even more obvious when we return to Paleolithic man and attempt to determine more precisely his probable attitude toward woman, a creature often so enigmatic, a frequent source of unrest and almost of fear, and yet perfectly and necessarily united to the physical and intellectual being of the male.<sup>3</sup> But to understand this attitude better, it is perhaps necessary to recall if only briefly the life and surroundings of these upper Paleolithic communities of the Aurignacian, the Solutrean, and the Magdalenian epochs.<sup>4</sup> This was a difficult and perilous life for the men; the hunters struggled with brute force against *elephas primigenius*, *rhinoceros tichorinus*, *ursus spelaeus*, *felis spelaea*, *hyena spelaea*, and *bison priscus*, or pursued animals such as the

2. U. Pestalozza, *Religione Mediterranea* (Milan, 1951), *Preludio*.

3. "There is in them (women) something which disturbs man and before which he feels himself disarmed." L. Lévy-Bruhl, *Le Surnaturel et la Nature*, p. 387.

4. J. Déchelette, *Archéologie préhistorique* (Paris, Picard, 1912), Chaps. VI to X (especially IX-X). See also C. Maviglia, *Le Civiltà Paleolitiche* (Milan, 1955).

### *The Mediterranean Matriarchate*

wild boar, the reindeer, the elk, the stag, the ibex, the chamois, the roe, the horse; it was a life of watchful, tireless gathering for the women who, with the sureness of an almost infallible instinct, chose from the depths and the surface of the earth roots, grasses, flowers, leaves, barks, and fruits of the forest. The sense of terrestrial maternity, already born in these human groups, was to take hold with ever increasing firmness; at the same time the Great Female whom they had chosen as divine Patroness of their life and possessions tended more and more to be identified with the Earth, Mother and Nurse, and, like Earth, to extend her domain beyond the world of the living into that of the dead, piously placed with their ornaments and their furnishings in underground darkness. As woman rose, so did the priestess, to touch with her pure hands the sacred body of the Great Mother and to grasp immediately the secret affinities which bound them closely one to the other: affinities which must have become clearer and more remarkable in the agricultural era. Thousands of years later Plutarch was pleased to call the love meeting of man and woman a "labor of plowing and seeding."

The human groups of the Reindeer Age knew the use of coloring substances, red, yellow, and black, to paint their bodies and perhaps also for tattooing; they used masks for performing magico-religious acts; from seashells, animals' teeth, fishbones, imitations in ivory and bone, pure and colored crystals, bits of black amber—everything cleverly drilled with holes—they made necklaces, bracelets, and belts which accompanied man and woman into the tomb along with other objects of necessity and adornment. We become aware of a religion of the dead and of faith in a life which does not end here below, a more striking hypothesis if the red ochre found in traces on their skeletons was indeed intended as a magic substitute for blood to make life flow again into the dead. It is hardly necessary to mention the stupendous artistic sense of these prehistoric men, the variety and the extreme finesse of their hunting and fishing instruments and of the marvelous needles employed in their domestic industries. Let us content ourselves with this sketch which, though rapid, permits us to grasp, alongside the monstrously exuberant and overabundant nude female figures<sup>5</sup> (forms which are doubtless intended as more divine than human), a series of small heads of surprising charm and seriousness;<sup>6</sup> let us return to our Paleolithic man of the Aurignacian, the Solutrean, or

5. Hoernes-Menghin, *Urgeschichte der bildenden Kunst in Europa* (Vienna, Schroll, 1925), pp. 121, 163, 165, 167.

6. J. Déchelette, *op. cit.*, p. 215. Hoernes-Menghin, *op. cit.*, p. 165.



the Magdalenian epochs, dreamily reflective before the enigma of woman.

The first enigma is the menstrual phenomenon, which he must have found strangely astonishing and troubling. This periodic flow of what was not ordinary blood, this bloody cycle obscurely but surely linked to the lunar cycle which already dominated his imagination and his experience, made of woman a mysterious being who even at the moment of supreme intimacy failed to reveal her secret. Besides this monthly cycle there was pregnancy. It is probable that upper Paleolithic man, like some savages today,<sup>7</sup> did not know the real purpose of the love union. If he did realize that there was a necessary and undeniable relation between pregnancy and the sexual act, he remained in the dark as to the true origin of the creature his woman was to carry within her for nine months. Where did it come from? The man would never have dared spy on woman during her inviolable daily liberty. But she, the woman, knew. There is abundant evidence for the belief that the woman became pregnant after *mixis* if she approached certain specified spots, strange-shaped rocks, caverns, piles of stones, particular trees or streams. From these places babies' souls leaped into the bosom of woman, who conceived. Whatever might be the condition of these "animulae," whether or not they were the souls of ancestors (according to a belief of the Australian Arunta<sup>8</sup>), one thing is indeed sure: hidden at the bottom of a crevasse, in furrows or pools, among the leaves of the trees, awaiting the passage of women, these souls awaited the proper moment to become incarnate, to exchange a sort of embryonic life in the breast of their primordial Mother, the Earth, for a truly uterine life.<sup>9</sup> Thus, in a state of stupor made up of joy, fear, and anxiety, as well as of fear and desire of the unknown which surrounded and touched him, while it remained a closed mystery, Paleolithic man saw his woman's belly grow gradually larger; without being able to grasp the mystery, he guessed the significance of the magic rites she practiced upon herself to prepare for a safe delivery. I see no other possible interpretation of the engraving on bone which represents a naked woman in an advanced stage of pregnancy spread supine under the belly of a female reindeer.<sup>10</sup> Here already is a shining example of that feeling of reverence, almost a

7. See, for example, B. Malinowski, *The Sexual Life of the Savages in Northwestern Melanesia* (New York, Halcyon, 1929), p. 179 ff.

8. B. Spencer and J. J. Gillem, *The Native Tribes of Central Australia* (London and New York, Macmillan, 1889), Chaps. IV-V.

9. M. Eliade, *op. cit.*, pp. 66-67.

10. J. Déchelette, *op. cit.*, p. 223, fig. 2.

cult, toward certain animals reputedly superior to man—although in man too instinct was very strong—and at the same time that sense of familiarity, almost of intimacy, which became stronger and stronger during the Neolithic era, as domestication added to the human groups small and large animals, isolated and in flocks, and the understanding between the humanity of the former and the animality of the latter created a characteristic promiscuity capable of justifying all sorts of metamorphoses. One can readily understand that dominating the whole was the intelligent arbitrating instinct of woman, the magic touch of whose soft hands was much better adapted than the brute force of men to molding the sharp, unruly nature of the male animals. In all probability, Paleolithic woman, noting the extreme ease with which the female reindeer gave birth to her young, attempted to assume herself the favorable maternal attitudes of the animal by executing appropriate rites of sympathetic magic. After delivery—and even the extraordinary dilatation of so small an organ must have stupefied the man, mute and frightened witness of woman in labor—another prodigy was to take place. Again, the woman, in a state of absolute autonomy, gave the newborn being the special and unique food which it needed. From hidden sources within the female being an abundant flow of milk was endlessly provided, filling and swelling the ample breasts from which the nursing child greedily sucked its life. For upper Paleolithic man everything about woman, from puberty to maternity, was obscure, mysterious, marvelous. If we add to this testimony, fruit of an elementary physiological observation, the situation of woman in the domestic economy, not merely as she furnished the community with products of the earth known only to herself but also in her role as depository of a pharmacopoeia seized with infallible instinct from the earth itself, of mysterious understanding, of magic powers sometimes yielding stupendous effects in the community, the conclusion which man must necessarily have drawn from that state of affairs appears in all its striking truth! Not only did he recognize that his own attitudes, capacities, and powers were indeed modest compared to the powerful self-sufficiency of the woman, but he was also led naturally to admit that if, in the exercise of his own activities, the magic influence which arose from her to accompany and direct him should ever be lacking, he would be lost. There is no more significant and captivating scene in this regard than that offered by two rock engravings from the Mesolithic age, discovered at the oasis of Tiout in the Algerian Sahara.<sup>11</sup> Followed at a certain distance by his woman, a

11. C. Hentze, *Mythes et Symboles lunaires* (Anvers, 1932), pp. 46-47, figs. 6 and 7.

hunter is about to shoot an arrow. A line is drawn from the pubic region of the woman to that of the man. Interpretation is not difficult. This man needs constantly to undergo the influence of woman, to feel the irradiation of her feminine "nature," the intimate source of her life, the mystery hidden in her flesh, reaching him precisely at the point of his own virile force. This triumphant and irresistible "charm" of the feminine *aidoion*, already operative on men of the stone age, was to continue intact for millennia as a prerogative of goddesses and women: from the *anasyrma* (lifting of the skirts) of Elusian Demeter, of Egyptian Hator, of Indian Maya, of the Queen of Ireland in the Cuchulinn Saga, to the women who glorify with this propitiatory gesture the goddess of Bubaste and to those who raise their tunics before the menacing fury of the sea.<sup>12</sup> This clear motif of magic sexual action is not the only one we may observe between the upper Paleolithic and the Mesolithic ages. Remains from the Reindeer Age prove—beyond the shadow of a doubt, I believe—that these men of the upper Paleolithic already saw the lozenge, more or less blunted, as the double of the feminine *aidoion*, and the fish as the double of the *phallos*: lozenges and fish in series are widely employed with that precise signification on Chinese ceramics, on ceramics of Susa II (where the serpent is sometimes substituted for the fish), Bukovina, Bessarabia, southern Russia, prehistoric Spain,<sup>13</sup> on certain Attic vases with geometric decoration (where the signs may have lost their original meaning),<sup>14</sup> and finally on numerous Babylonian seals, where the lozenge-fish relationship is made extremely clear.<sup>15</sup> The Paleolithic lozenge yields in the Neolithic and the Eneolithic to true representations of feminine beings—certainly mother-goddesses—with enormous vulvas, very crudely realistic, or of isolated vulvas, identical to the preceding and having the same significance.<sup>16</sup> Ishtav, as well, chose one day to be represented by her own *aidoion* carved

12. U. Pestalozza, *op. cit.*, pp. 34, 57, 64, 298, 300-301.

13. C. Hentze, *op. cit.*, pp. 124, 125, fig. 117; p. 121, fig. 113; p. 96, figs. 74-76; p. 99, fig. 82; p. 78, fig. 48; p. 116, pl. VI; p. 80, fig. 52; p. 81, figs. 54-55; p. 134, fig. 130; p. 78, fig. 50 (cf. *Anthropos*, Band IX, 1914, Hf. 5-6, p. 971, fig. 30); p. 77, fig. 46; *Anthropos* (same year), p. 976, fig. 43.

14. W. Hahland, *Neue Denkmäler des attischen Heroen und Totenkultes, dans Festschrift für Friedrich Zucker* (Berlin, 1954), Taf. 9, Abb. 4; Taf. 11, Abb. 7; Taf. 12, Abb. 9; Taf. 13, Abb. 10; Taf. 16, Abb. 12; Taf. 19, Abb. 17.

15. C. Hentze, *op. cit.*, pp. 128-130, figs. 121-128; Morris Jastrow, Jr., *Bildermappe zur Religion Babylonien und Assyrien*, Nrr. 193, 198, 220, 223; 41, 14; 43, 8; 45, 3.

16. Glory, Sanz Martinez, Neukirch, Georgeot, *Les peintures de l'âge du métal en France méridionale in Préhistoire*, tome X, 1948, pp. 7-122; p. 9, fig. 2; p. 66; p. 88, fig. 18; p. 95, fig. 76; p. 96 (also p. 66); pp. 113-114.

in a block of lapis-lazuli<sup>17</sup> and more than one of the mother-goddesses has included in her name that of her own intimate lozenge.<sup>18</sup>

In the light of the above facts I believe that it is not indulging in pure and simple fantasy to imagine a man of the upper Paleolithic who, fixing his gaze on the flourishing *ephebaion* of his woman, dark with violet reflections like the hair of Sappho, finds himself at the same time contemplating a mound of earth covered with a bushy, deep purple growth. Here I am merely plagiarizing the poet of the *Song of Songs*, who took his inspiration from old Canaanitic, that is, Mediterranean, sources, and describes a similar scene with more richness and color.<sup>19</sup> Immediately operative on affinities grasped in this fashion is the law of primitive mentality, so characteristic of Mediterranean peoples, which quite naturally transforms relationships based on nearness, presence, or contact into relationships of identity; such transformations are encouraged by ignorance of the clear and inviolable separations among various elements of the natural order, which are believed to blend into one another, justifying all imaginable metamorphoses, exogamies, and conceptions.<sup>20</sup> These relationships of identity lead to an unshakable belief in simultaneous existence: in this case, the double aspect of the feminine mystery, womanly and vegetable, both sharing an absolute reality without any symbolic allusion. In such a way Paleolithic man finally saw woman as a small earth and the earth as an immense female, indissolubly united through the privilege of maternity common to both. Thus there was ever more deeply rooted in the Paleolithic mind a religion of the earth, mother and nurse, whose light was reflected upon the minor queens of families, mothers as the earth, nourishing as the earth, closely linked to earth by mysterious ties which the slower mentality of men could not grasp. Women were little mothers as compared to the great mother, universal generatrix; they were elevated by the supreme goddess to a divine function simply because of that sovereign dignity, the highest of all.

Besides this we must not forget the perfect accord established between a matriarchate of feminine prestige and privilege and the specifically con-

17. F. J. Dölger, *Der heilige Fisch*, etc. (Münster im Westf., 1922), p. 186 (in a hymn to Ishtar-Tamuz).

18. U. Pestalozza, *op. cit.*, pp. 18-19; 41-42; 66-67; 70.

19. *Cantique des Cantiques*, IV, 13 ff., VII, 2; P. Haupt, *Biblische Liebeslieder* (Leipzig, 1907), p. 90, nn. 35, 36; p. 34 ff., n. 20; U. Pestalozza, *op. cit.*, p. 13, pp. 20-22. For the Paleolithic flora, see H. Obermaier, *Diluvialflora*, in the *Lexikon der Vorgeschichte* (Berlin, 1924), II, pp. 414-419.

20. U. Pestalozza, *op. cit.*, p. 16 ff., p. 223, p. 270 ff.

servative function of woman within the community: woman was enriched by all the experiences and all the values known from then on, the most important of which were these mystical relations with Mother Earth, imperceptible to the senses and yet real. This function tended essentially to keep, to nourish, to save from degeneration habits established with difficulty. Woman would, for thousands of years, guard faithfully the traditions developing out of such habits. Let us go a step further and employ an expression in no way anachronistic when applied to the era under consideration: woman was already functioning as guardian of home and fireside in the fullest meaning of this expression. Certain analogies between the hearth and the mystery of woman, which were real identifications in ancient times—they persisted into Ancient Greece—go back to this prehistoric era. *Eskhara*, a word of Mediterranean base, meant hearth in general but also denoted the wooden tablet used in ritual lighting of the fire, and the feminine *aidoion*, very precisely described.<sup>21</sup> Here we grasp the primitive conception which identified woman, source and giver of life, with the domestic hearthside, in its turn a source of life by means of heat and light. It is as if the woman, mystically become one with the *eskhara*, provided from within herself the warming and light-giving flame. While there is no doubt that this image was born in the Mediterranean Paleolithic, it is curious to note that it appears elsewhere in accordance with the ever valid law of elementary ideas. A myth of British New Guinea recounts the story of an old woman who prepared food for the men in the heat of the sun but cooked her own food secretly by fire from her own private parts. The rest of the story tells us that this is no ordinary woman, but rather a magic "rainmaker," related to the serpent who is himself related to fire: she is in a word an epiphany of the earth.<sup>22</sup> It should also be observed that the Italian Mediterranean substratum maintained much more fully than the Greek this primitive mystical identification of woman and hearth in the figure of Vesta, not a divinity of the hearth, but a hearth-goddess, whose sanctity was more vital and operative than that of Hestia; it was preserved in the order of Vestals, originally virgins of a very particular sort of virginity, for already they enjoyed a divine subsidiary, the "genius Populi Romani," always present above the hearth as a *fascinus qui*

21. U. Pestalozza, *Pagine di Religione Mediterranea* (Milan, 1945), pp. 69-70; *Religione Mediterranea*, p. 231.

22. C. G. Seligmann, *The Melanesians of British New Guinea* (Cambridge, 1910), pp. 379-380; P. Hambruch, *Südseemaechen* (Jena, 1931), p. 68.

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*deus inter sacra romana a Vestalibus colitur*,<sup>23</sup> ("phallus which is worshipped as a God in the Roman sacred rites by the Vestals") they were in the most extreme degree tabu to human contact.

We may say here that we have arrived at a conclusion: a primitive matriarchate is possible, for it is born spontaneously of the attitude of prehistoric man toward woman in whom he recognizes and admits an explicit superiority heightened by the aura of mystery surrounding her; this superiority fills him with a feeling not too far from adoration: *aidos*, as the Greeks put it, a word which has inspired my friend Kerenyi in some of his most important pages. Prehistoric man venerates woman in the disturbing periodic sign of the feminine nature, in the astonishing autonomy of mother and nurse, in the extreme assurance and liveliness of instinct and intelligence, in the domain of a magic world closely linked to the vegetable world. Paleolithic man derives an ensemble of particularly profound impressions from the physiology and the psychology of woman; he interprets these in a completely rudimentary way; they are penetrated by the mystic sense which, unaffected by the law of contradiction, obeys with docility, on the contrary, the law of participation; according to this law, in the collective representations of primitive mentality, objects, beings, and phenomena can, in a manner incomprehensible to us, be at the same time themselves and something else. In other words, Paleolithic man lived in the affective category of the supernatural, where nothing is rationally perceived, but everything is mystically felt.<sup>24</sup> This ensemble of ineffaceable impressions already favored as a natural consequence in the age which concerns us, the genesis of the matriarchate, independent of any cyclo-cultural consideration and, with the matriarchate, the birth of the religion of the mother. We must only stop speaking—and more from polemic taste than from real conviction, I would say—of an absolute preponderance of woman in the matriarchate and of a religion exclusively feminine.<sup>25</sup>

No serious scholar interested in the matriarchal phenomenon has ever been known to refer to an absolute matriarchate. The matriarchate is a social phenomenon where the woman, for reasons we have seen, occupies a position of particular prestige within the field established by her own

23. Pliny, *Natural History* XXVIII, 39. See J. G. Frazer, *Lectures on the Early History of the Kingship* (London, Macmillan, 1905), p. 221. See also pp. 218–220. For real hearths with remains of burnt wood from the upper Paleolithic, see C. Maviglia, *La Civiltà Paleolitiche*, p. 28.

24. J. Przyluski, *La Participation* (Paris, Alcan, 1940), pp. 3–4; U. Pestalozza, *Religione Mediterranea*, p. 15.

25. See M. Eliade, *op. cit.*, pp. 31 ff.

nature; the situation is honestly recognized by the men, the exercise of whose functions is equally important to the well-being of the community. Such was the rule, which had its exceptions however, for behind the figures of Semiramis and the Amazons one senses a very special feminine preponderance. For my part, I concur completely with the views of Charles Picard,<sup>26</sup> who sees the Amazons as deriving from a Pre-Hellenic social and religious state, established after the cult of the Great Goddess in southern Russia and in Anatolia (Momolina Marconi points out that the Amazons were the "very faithful ones" of the Asiatic Great Mother<sup>27</sup>) had undergone at one and the same time its political and its military development. Nothing could be more sensible and plausible. I would add that in the Pre-Hellenic world, as J. G. Frazer has shown with abundant examples,<sup>28</sup> the chief of state was usually a foreigner who became king upon marrying the eldest daughter of his predecessor. Obviously such a marriage reflected upon the queen a new prestige which heightened her fundamental prestige, that of being a woman. Neither can one speak seriously of an exclusively feminine matriarchal religion which, in my opinion, is unimaginable. A religion of the mother thus conceived would be deprived of those basic elements of contrast which are one of its most striking characteristics. A religion of the mother, that is of the female deified and identified with the earth, itself mother and nurse, is inconceivable without a whole series of masculine deities or, let us say, divine males, who are subordinate to her. The brother, the son, subsidiaries of the Great Goddess, are constituent figures in the religion of the mother; together with her they form the basis of the religion. A supreme female deity emerges who possesses—and often unleashes—all the instincts of her sex, and who at the same time shares with women (and this is profoundly admirable) the difficulties inherent in their nature (Leto endures the pains of childbirth for nine long days and nights), all the while enjoying a generative autonomy, the form and guarantee of her supreme liberty. It is for this very reason that she is so often virgin, for an intact, immaculate state of nature, to which no external force has ever done violence, is no doubt the state which represents, confirms, and proclaims the ideal of absolute independence in its most perfect form. But equally congenial in her nature are autogenerative maternity, accomplished without mating, and which

26. Ch. Picard, *Ephèse et Claros* (Paris, Boccard, 1922), p. 449.

27. Momolina Marconi, *Riflessi mediterranei nella più antica religione laziale* (Milan, 1939), p. 103.

28. J. G. Frazer, *op. cit.*, pp. 239 ff.

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originates in the fulguration of a god or a man. Between these two poles, the virginal sign which she loses or magically reestablishes at will, and the maternal sense, the divine and human life of the Great Goddess unfolds.<sup>29</sup>

That the cult of the mother (the Earth-Mother) forms the nucleus of Mediterranean religion is, I believe, an unquestionable truth, just as a religion of the mother presupposes the existence of matriarchal communities. The two terms are inseparable. Traces and occasionally vivid evidence of the ancient matriarchate are frequent all the way from the Anatolian to the Iberian worlds, in Crete, the Aegean Islands, Greece, Egypt, Libya, Italy and its islands, and north Africa as far as the Pillars of Hercules.<sup>30</sup> Following from this, and from what has been shown in these pages, it is entirely legitimate to conclude that even in the Mediterranean basin, the matriarchate must go back beyond the Neolithic, therefore beyond the origins of agriculture, and precisely to the upper Paleolithic, where, as I have attempted to show, there existed in nature and in life the most favorable conditions for the birth of the matriarchate.

In a tantric work, the *Shaktisamgama-Tantra* (I quote from the very recent and interesting pages of Giuseppe Tucci in his *Earth in India and Tibet*<sup>31</sup>) are the following lines:

Woman is the creator of the universe.

She is the veritable body of the universe;

woman is the support of the three worlds,

she is the true essence of our body.

There exists no happiness other than that which woman can give.

There exists no other way than that which woman can open to us.

There has never existed, nor exists, nor will exist,

a fortune comparable to a woman; no reign,

nor place of pilgrimage, nor yoga, nor prayer,

nor mystic formula, nor asceticism, nor riches.

If we bear in mind—as Mr. Tucci points out—that the *Tantras*, the branch of Indian literature most often scorned, found their basic religious conception in the deepest regions of the pre-Aryan world; that their *Shakti*, “the most sacred of sacred things,” derives not from the

29. U. Pestalozza, *op. cit.*, pp. 37–38. See also the *Preludio*.

30. R. Briffault, *The Mothers* (London, 1952), Vol. 1, pp. 388–414. See also V. Bertoldi, *Onomastica Iberica e Matriarcato Mediterraneo*. Reprinted from *Revista Portuguesa de Filologia*, Vol. II (Coimbra, 1948).

31. In *Eranos-Jahrbuch* 1953, Vd. XXII (Zurich, 1954), pp. 359–360.



Vedic *Prithivi* but from the aboriginal mothers, products of primeval intuitions preceding any exercise of reason, cosmic or moral research; that these mothers are skilled as creative powers which are never exhausted and which support everything that exists—like incarnations of the mystery of life and death, sometimes terrible and frightening, sometimes good and helpful; that they are identified by their worshipers with the earth and thus become miniature earth-mothers; that these mothers are born of the same archetype and are reflected in a considerable series of very changeable forms within their fundamental unity, confused here and there today with a *Durga* or a *Kālī*; if we recall that extraordinary yeast of feminine religion which fermented in the most primitive sub-stratum of India, we get the impression that something similar must have been operative in the consciousness of upper Paleolithic man, to whom the verses of the *Tantras* quoted above might not have been incomprehensible; I believe he would also have understood the following verse, which is also taken from the *Tantras*:<sup>32</sup>

“By adoring Kumari (the maiden fully blossoming in her adolescence) Man bends the Universe to his will.”

32. *Op. cit.*, p. 361.

## THE STRUCTURE AND CLASSIFICATION OF GAMES

In 1933, the rector of the University of Leyden, J. Huizinga, chose as the theme of his solemn speech, "the boundaries of play and of work in culture." He was to take this subject up again and to develop it in a powerful and original work published in 1938, *Homo ludens*. Most of the statements in this book are debatable. Nonetheless, it opens the way to extremely fertile research and reflection. It is to Huizinga's lasting credit that he masterfully analyzed the fundamental characteristics of play and that he demonstrated the importance of its role in the development of civilization. He wanted on the one hand to find an exact definition of the essential nature of play; on the other hand, he attempted to shed some light on that part of play that haunts or enlivens the principal manifestations of all culture, the arts as well as philosophy, poetry as well as juridical institutions, and even certain aspects of war.

Huizinga achieved brilliantly what he set out to do. However, if he discovered play, whose presence and influence had until then been overlooked, he deliberately neglected to describe and classify the games themselves, as if all play represented an answer to the same need and explained the same psychological attitude. Thus a study of his first formulae helps

Translated by Elaine P. Halperin.

us to understand the strange lacunae in his inquiry. We recall that he defined play in the following manner:

Summing up the formal characteristics of play we might call it a free activity standing quite consciously outside "ordinary" life as being "not serious," but at the same time absorbing the player intensely and utterly. It is an activity connected with no material interest, and no profit can be gained by it. It proceeds within its own proper boundaries of time and space according to fixed rules and in an orderly manner. It promotes the formation of social groupings which tend to surround themselves with secrecy and to stress their difference from the common world by disguise or other means.<sup>1</sup>

Such a definition, though all the words have value and meaning, is both too broad and too narrow. It is meritorious and fruitful to have grasped the affinity between play and secrecy or mystery, but this relationship should not enter into a definition of play, which is almost always ostentatious. Undoubtedly secrecy, mystery, disguise lend themselves to an activity of play, but it should be immediately added that this activity necessarily takes place at the expense of secrecy and mystery. It exposes, publicizes and in a way *expends* secrecy, tending, in a word, to deprive it of its very nature.

Then again, that part of Huizinga's definition which alludes to play as an action devoid of any material interest entirely excludes betting and games of chance—that is to say, gambling houses, casinos, horse races, lotteries which, for good or evil, occupy an important place in the economy and in the daily life of different peoples, under an infinite variety of forms which makes the constancy of the relations between risk and profit all the more impressive. Games of chance, which are also money games, figure almost not at all in Huizinga's work. This deliberate exclusion is not without consequence.

Under these circumstances, it would be better to address ourselves to another formula of Huizinga's, less fruitful than the preceding one, but which, in my opinion at least, does not give rise to any major difficulty:

Play is a voluntary action or occupation executed within certain fixed limits of time and place, according to rules freely accepted but absolutely binding, having its aim in itself and accompanied by a feeling of tension, joy and the consciousness that it is "different" from "ordinary" life.<sup>2</sup>

Although this second definition does not deliberately ignore games of

1. *Homo ludens* (London, Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1949), p. 13.

2. *Ibid.*, p. 28.

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chance, neither does it attribute a sufficient place to them. Moreover, the last part of it not only advantageously replaces the too explicit mention of secret and of mystery, but also gives one to understand that play could consist in the *representation* of something. Here, it is no longer the world of betting that is taken into consideration, but that of spectacle and interpretation, of dramatic play.

These observations, which extend very markedly the domain explored by Huizinga, still overlook such things as kites, cross-word puzzles, and rocking horses, and to some extent dolls, games of patience, Chinese puzzles, hoops, most toys, and several of the more widespread diversions.

What do we get from these summary observations? First, that play is certainly an activity that is

1. Free: the player cannot be forced to participate without the game immediately changing its very nature.
2. Separate: circumscribed within boundaries of time and space that are precise and fixed in advance.<sup>3</sup>
3. Regulated: subject to conventions which suspend ordinary rules and temporarily establish a new law which alone counts.

However, these three attributes—whose prime importance I in no way challenge—imply, perhaps because of the fact that they do not affect the structure of the data they define, that such data should in turn be made the object of a distribution which attempts, this time, to take into account, not the characteristics which oppose them as a whole to the rest of reality, but those which confer upon them, among other things, their decidedly irreducible originality. In other words, once the *genus proximum* has been determined, it becomes urgent to state precisely the *differentia specifica* of each subsidiary category.

To this end I suggest a division under three principal headings in accordance with whether, in the different games, the role of competition, luck, or disguise predominates. For all practical purposes only one of these, the first, attracted Huizinga's attention. I shall call them, *Agôn*, *Alea* and *Mimicry*, respectively. All three definitely belong to the realm of play. One *plays* football or billiards or chess (*agôn*); roulette or the lottery (*alea*);

3. As for space: the hopscotch diagram, the checker-board, the chess-board, the stadium, the playing field, the track, the ring, the dueling ground, the stage, the arena, etc. . . . As for time: the beginning and the end of a game, the complications of a possible prolongation, the kind of disgrace entailed by a default, which the fact of calling, "I give up," represents, or by any withdrawal during the course of a game or of a match, unless it is caused by a physical accident.

pirates or Nero or Hamlet (*mimicry*). However, these terms do not cover the world of play in its entirety. Perhaps one should also single out the existence of a common principle of diversion, of turbulence, of free improvisation and of insouciant self-expression whereby a certain uncontrolled fantasy, which we shall call *paidia*, manifests itself. It likewise seems necessary to define a complementary tendency that is the inverse of this instinct in certain respects but not in all: the penchant for adapting play to arbitrary, imperative, and deliberately hindering conventions in order to obtain a perfectly useless although strictly determinate result. I shall call this last component *ludus*.

It is not my intention, in employing this foreign nomenclature to establish some sort of pedantic mythology, totally devoid of meaning. But, because I had to assemble disparate manifestations under a single rubric, it seemed to me that the most economical way of so doing was to borrow from this or that language both the most significant and the most comprehensive term possible in order to keep each ensemble studied from being uniformly marked by the particular characteristic of one of the elements that compose it; this could not fail to happen if the name of one element was used to designate the entire group. Besides, as I proceed with my attempt to establish the classification which I have fixed upon, everyone will have the opportunity to appreciate for himself the necessity of utilizing a nomenclature that does not refer too directly to concrete experience, which it is partly designed to break down according to a hitherto unstated principle.

### *Agôn*

A whole group of games appears in the form of competition, as a struggle in which equality of chance is artificially created in order to make sure that the antagonists confront each other under ideal circumstances. This will give a precise and incontestable worth to the victor's triumph. Each time, therefore, the contest hinges on a single quality—speed, endurance, vigor, memory, deftness, ingenuity, etc.—operating within defined limits and without any external help. The winner will therefore appear to be the best in a precise category of feats. Such is the rule for athletic contests and the *raison d'être* of their multiple subdivisions—whether two individuals or two teams are competing (polo, tennis, football, boxing, fencing, etc.), or whether an indeterminate number of competitors are participating (races of all kinds, riflery, golf, athletics, etc.). Games in which each contestant begins with the same number of identical elements

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also belong to this category. Draughts and chess are perfect examples. The quest for equality of chance from the start is so obviously the essential principle of the contest that it is reestablished by assigning a handicap to players of superior ability. In other words, within the equality of chance established from the start, a second inequality, proportional to the supposed relative strength of the participants, is created. It is significant that such a system exists for the muscular type of *agôn* (sports matches) as well as for the most cerebral type of *agôn* (chess, for example, in which the weaker player is given an extra pawn, knight or rook).

For each contestant the mainspring of the game is his desire to excel and win recognition for his ability in a given domain. Furthermore, the practice of *agôn* presupposes concentration, appropriate training, assiduous effort, and the will to win. It implies discipline and perseverance. It makes the champion rely solely on his own resources, encourages him to make the best possible use of them, and forces him to utilize them fairly and within fixed limits which, being the same for everyone, result in rendering the superiority of the winner indisputable. The *agôn* appears as the pure form of personal merit and serves to demonstrate it.

Outside of or on the periphery of play, one observes the notion of *agôn* in other cultural phenomena that conform to the same code: the duel, the tournament, certain constant and remarkable aspects of what we call polite warfare.

### *Alea*

In Latin this is the word for the game of dice. I use it here to designate all games—in contrast to *agôn*—which are based upon an inequality external to the player, over which he has not the slightest control. Consequently, it is far less a question of triumphing over an adversary than over destiny. To put it more plainly, fate is the sole agent of victory; and where rivalry exists, victory means only that the winner was luckier than the loser. Dice, roulette, heads or tails, baccarat, lotteries, etc. provide unmistakable examples of this category of games. In this case not only is no attempt made to eliminate the injustice of chance, but it is the pure arbitrariness of luck that constitutes the sole mainspring of the game.

*Alea* signalizes and reveals the boons of fate. The player's role is an entirely passive one. He does not display his abilities or his propensities, the resources of his skill, of his muscles, or of his intelligence. All he does is to wait for the decision of fate. He gambles a stake. Justice—forever sought after, but this time differently, and, here again, prone to operate

under ideal circumstances—rigorously accurate, the proportionate reward for his gamble. All the efforts referred to above to equalize the contestants' chances are employed in this case to scrupulously balance *alea* and profit.

In contrast to *agôn*, *alea* negates work, patience, skill, qualifications. It eliminates professional endowments, order, training. In one instant it abolishes accumulated results. It is either total failure or absolute favor. It bestows upon the lucky player infinitely more than a lifetime of work, discipline, and hardship could procure for him. It seems like an insolent and supreme mockery of merit.

*Agôn* is a vindication of personal responsibility, *alea* a resignation of the will, a surrender to destiny. Certain games like dominoes and most card games combine *agôn* and *alea*: chance governs the way the "hands" of each player are composed and they then do their best, according to their lights, to exploit the lot that a blind fate has assigned to them. In a game like bridge, science and reason constitute the only means a player has to defend himself, and it is these that permit him to make the very most of the cards dealt to him; in a game like poker the attributes of psychological insight and human understanding are more likely to count.

Generally speaking, the role of money is all the more important since chance plays a greater part and consequently the player's opportunities to defend himself are less good. The reason for this is very clear: *alea's* function is not to make the most intelligent person win the money, but, on the contrary, to abolish the natural or acquired superiority of individuals in order to place everyone on an absolute and equal footing in the face of luck's blind verdict.

Since the result of *agôn* is necessarily uncertain and must, paradoxically, relate to the effect of pure chance, given the fact that the contestants' chances are, in principle, as even as possible, it then follows that any encounter that possesses the characteristics of an ideally regulated competition can be the object of betting, in other words of *aleas*: to wit, horse races, or greyhound races, football or Basque pelota matches, cock-fights. It even happens that the stakes vary constantly during the game, according to the ups and downs of *agôn*.<sup>4</sup>

*Agôn* and *alea* represent contrasting attitudes, and in some way, symmetrical ones, but they both conform to the same law: the artificial establishment of conditions of absolute equality among the players, which reality denies mankind. For nothing in life is clear unless it is precisely that

4. For example, in the Balearic Islands at a game of pelota, or in Colombia and the Antilles, at cock-fights.

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everything in it, luck as well as merit, is always disorder in the beginning. Play, *agôn* or *alea*, is therefore an attempt to substitute perfect situations for the normal confusion of everyday life. These perfect situations are such that the role of merit or of luck appears clear and unequivocal. They also imply that everyone must enjoy exactly the same possibilities to prove his worth, or, on the other scale, the exact same chance to win. In one way or another one escapes from the world by making it other. One can also escape from it by making oneself other. This is what we call *mimicry*.

#### *Mimicry*

Every game presupposes the temporary acceptance, if not of an illusion (although this last word means nothing more than entry into play, *inclusio*), at least of a closed, conventional, and, in certain respects, fictitious universe. The play can consist not in the unfolding of an activity or in experiencing one's fate in an imaginary setting, but in becoming an illusory person oneself and in behaving accordingly. One then finds oneself confronted by a diversified series of manifestations whose common characteristic is that they rest on the fact that the subject plays at believing, at pretending to himself, or at making others believe that he is someone other than he is; he temporarily forgets, disguises, strips his own personality in order to be another. I choose to designate these manifestations by the term *mimicry* (which, in English, is the word for the mimetism of insects), in order to emphasize the primitive, elementary and quasi-instinctive nature of the impulse which produces them. They include, first of all, the behavior of a child who pretends he is an airplane (and acts like one by stretching out his arms and imitating the roar of a motor), who plays soldier, pretends he is a musketeer or a gangster, etc. They also embrace any diversion that requires a mask or a costume and consists in the very fact that the player is disguised and in the consequence of this. Finally, it is clear that theatrical representations and dramatic interpretations rightfully belong to this group.

The pleasure resides in being someone else or in making others think you are someone else. But since this is play we are discussing, it does not essentially involve fooling the spectator. A child who pretends to be a train will readily refuse his father's kiss, saying that one shouldn't kiss a locomotive. He does not attempt to make his father believe that he is a real locomotive. At a carnival, a masked person does not try to convince others that he is a real marquis, or a real toreador, or a real Indian, any more than an actor tries to make people believe that he "really" is Lear or Charles V.



The spy or the fugitive, however, disguises himself to really fool people because he is not playing a game.

Activity, imagination, interpretation, *mimicry* can scarcely have a relation to *alea*, which imposes upon the player the immobility and the chill of mute expectancy. *Agôn*, however, is not necessarily excluded. At the very moment when an actor plays a part, he tries, more indistinctly but also more profoundly, to be a better actor than the others, or to interpret a role that was created before him better than the others have done. He knows that he is subject to the public's judgment and to criticism. He plays, in the sense that he represents such or such a hero, but he also plays because he expects a prize in a prolix but unceasing competition with living or dead rivals.

*Mimicry* contains most of the characteristics of play: freedom, convention, suspension of the real, circumscribed time and space. But continuous submission to precise and imperious regulations is less obvious here than elsewhere. I know of course that on the stage the actor must adhere to his lines, but one can hardly compare this servitude to the observance of fixed regulations which define the structure of a game. In the latter, it is a matter of a *framework* always necessarily identical with itself; and in the former, a matter of a *content* which must vary in each case, which is not a limitation but rather the substance, the very being of the character to be invoked. The frame work is, in truth, nothing more than the text.

Rules are inseparable from play as soon as it acquires what I shall call an institutional existence. From that moment on, they become a part of its nature, transforming play into a fertile and decisive instrument of culture. But it remains true that a primary freedom, which is the need for relaxation and the whole field of diversion and fantasy, resides at the source of play. This freedom is the indispensable prime mover of play, and remains at the origin of its most complex and rigidly organized forms. Such primary power of improvisation and gaiety, which I call *paidia*, is fused with the taste for gratuitous difficulty, which I propose to call *ludus*, in order to bring about the different games to which, without exaggeration, a civilizing property can be attributed. They illustrate, in fact, the moral and intellectual values of a culture. Moreover, they help to fix and define them.

I chose the term *paidia* because its roots signify the word "child" and because I do not wish to disconcert the reader needlessly by using a term borrowed from an antipodal language. But the Sanskrit word *krēdati* and the Chinese word *wan*, as far as I can judge by the indications that Huizinga

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provided and reproduced, seem to me both richer and clearer. *Krēdati* denotes the play of adults, of children, and of animals. It applies more specifically to gambols, that is to say, to sudden and capricious movements which a superabundance of gaiety or vitality engenders. It is also used to signify erotic, illicit relations, the ebb and flow of waves, and all things that undulate to the caprice of the wind. The word *wan* is even more explicit, as much in regard to what it defines as to what it does not: it means essentially childish play, but also all the varieties of carefree and frivolous diversion which, for example, the verbs to frolic, to frisk, to jest,<sup>5</sup> to trifle, etc. evoke. Besides, and this is more revealing, it also means to examine, to manipulate, to fashion into trinkets, which connects it with the modern category of *hobbies*, in other words, the collector's mania. It evokes, as well, the peaceful and soothing softness of moonlight.<sup>6</sup> Finally, *it is not used* to denote either competition, games of skill, dice games, or dramatic interpretation; in other words, it excludes equally all three categories of institutional games: *agōn*, *alea* and *mimicry*.

In the light of these relationships and of these semantic exclusions, what can be the scope and the significance of the term *paidia*? I, for one, would define it as the word that encompasses the spontaneous manifestations of the instinct of play: the cat entangled in a ball of yarn, the dog licking himself, the infant laughing at his rattle—all these represent the first identifiable examples of this kind of activity. It occurs in all joyous exuberance, the kind that is expressed by an immediate and disordered agitation, by an impulsive, relaxing, and deliberately immoderate pastime, whose impromptu and unruly character remains its essential, if not its sole *raison d'être*. We do not lack perfectly clear illustrations of this kind of sudden movement, of color, or of noise, from pencil marks to daubing with paint, from squabbling to uproar.

Such manifestations generally have no label and cannot have one, precisely because they remain within the bounds of stability, of every distinctive sign, of every clearly differentiated existence which would enable our vocabulary to sanction its autonomy by a specific appellation. Besides, soon the conventions, the techniques, the tools appear, and with them the first games: leap-frog, hide and seek, the hoop, blind man's

5. It goes without saying that this last need is to be understood in its actual sense, because the *baguenaude* is really an assemblage of rings, the manipulation of which is complicated and demands the player's extreme concentration and which, therefore, belongs to the category of *ludus*.

6. Information which Duyvendak communicated to Huizinga, cf. *Homo ludens*, p. 32.

bluff, dolls. Here the contradictory paths of *agôn*, *alea* and *mimicry* branch off. The pleasure one feels in resolving a difficulty occurs here too; we are speaking of the complication that is deliberately created, arbitrarily defined, so that the fact that one has finally seen it through brings no advantage other than the inner satisfaction of having solved it. This main-spring which is clearly *ludus* also can be observed in the different categories of games, with the exception of those that depend entirely upon a decision of fate. It appears as both complement of an instruction for *paidia*, which it disciplines and enriches. It provides the opportunity for training and normally results in the conquest of a determined skill, in the acquisition of a particular mastery, in the management of such or such an apparatus, or in the capacity to find a satisfactory answer to problems of a strictly conventional order. It differs from *agôn* in that the player's tension and his talent function without any sense of competition or rivalry: he struggles against the obstacle and not against one or several contestants. Games like *bilboquet* (cup and ball), *diabolo* and yo-yo can be classified as manual skills. These simple instruments readily make use of natural, elementary laws; for example, in regard to the yo-yo, weight and rotation are involved and the skill consists in converting alternate, rectilinear movements into a continuous circular one. Inversely, the hoop rests on the exploitation of a concrete atmospheric condition. One can easily see that the possibilities of play are almost infinite. Games like *solitaire* or *baguenaude* (ring puzzle) belong entirely to another category of games: they make a constant appeal to the turn for computation and combination. Finally, cross-word puzzles, mathematical pastimes, anagrams, logographic verse of all sorts, the kind of active detective-story reading that is an attempt to discover the guilty party, chess or bridge problems—all these, devoid of instruments, constitute so many variations of the most widespread and the purest form of *ludus*.

One also observes a situation that in the beginning has a tendency to repeat itself infinitely, but on the basis of which new combinations can develop. They inspire the player to compete with himself and enable him to observe the stages of his progress on which he prides himself vis-à-vis those who share his taste. The relationship of *ludus* with *agôn* is evidenced in this way. Moreover, it is possible that, in the case of chess or bridge problems, the same game may appear sometimes as *agôn* and sometimes as *ludus*.

The combination of *ludus* and *alea* occurs just as frequently: it is particularly evident in games which one plays alone and where the ingenuity

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of the maneuvers influence the result to some extent, and in which the player can, to a slight degree, calculate how much impetus to give to the ball that marks the points and attempt to direct it. Nonetheless, in both these examples, it is mainly luck that determines the outcome. However, the fact that the player is not entirely helpless and that he knows he must rely on his skill or talent, even though this counts for very little, is enough to combine the character of *ludus* with that of *alea*.

Here, too, the player is competing with himself in a way, because he expects the next effort to succeed where the last failed, or he hopes to accumulate a higher number of points than his last score yielded. It is in this way that the influence of *agôn* is manifest, coloring, in fact, the general atmosphere of *ludus*. And even though both these games are played alone and, in principle, do not call for competition, it is quite simple to start a match at any time, with or without a prize, the kind, for example, that newspapers occasionally organize. Nor is it pure accident that slot machines are to be found in cafés—places where it is the custom for people to gather in groups, thus forming the embryo of a public.

There is one characteristic of *ludus* which, in my opinion, can be explained by the presence of *agôn*, and which is a constant burden: the fact that it depends largely upon fads of the moment. The yo-yo, the *bilboquet*, the *diabolo*, the *baguenaude*, came into being and then disappeared as if by magic. They took advantage of a certain passing fad that was to disappear without a trace and that was quickly replaced by another. Although somewhat more stable, the fad for intellectual pastimes is nonetheless a transitory one: riddles, anagrams, acrostics, charades—all these have had their hour. It is quite probable that cross-word puzzles and mystery stories will suffer the same fate. Such a phenomenon would be enigmatic if *ludus* represented as individualistic a pastime as it appears to; in reality, it is steeped in an atmosphere of competition. It can subsist only to the extent that it enjoys public favor, which transforms it into a virtual *agôn*. Lacking this, it is powerless to survive. In truth, it is not sufficiently supported by an organized spirit of competition, which is not essential to its practice, and neither does it provide material for any kind of spectacle capable of attracting the attention of a crowd. It remains uncertain and diffuse. It provides *paidia* with perpetually renewed forms. It invents a thousand opportunities and a thousand structures in which are to be found man's desire to relax and mainly his need, of which he apparently cannot be quit, to utilize the science and concentration, the skill and intelligence he possesses in the cause of pure uselessness.

In this sense, it represents that element in play whose cultural importance and fertility seem to be the most striking. It does not express as decided a psychological attitude as *agôn*, *alea* or *mimicry*, but in disciplining *paidia*, it works behind the scenes to give to the three fundamental categories their purity and their excellence.

There remains a last species of games which does not seem to belong to those already mentioned and which can be considered the only truly modern innovation in this domain: games which are based upon the pursuit of *vertigo*.

Without question, people have for a long time deliberately sought out the confusion that a slight giddiness provokes, for example, the activities of the whirling dervishes and the Mexican *voladores* (flying fish). Nor must we overlook, in the realm of the most anodyne play, the merry-go-round and the ancient swing. Every child knows well, how, in turning rapidly around and around, he is able to attain a centrifugal state of flight and wild prankishness in which his body has difficulty regaining its place and perception its clarity. Unquestionably he does it for fun and delights in it.

I suggest the term *ilinx* to include these different manifestations. It is Greek for whirlpool, from which is derived, precisely, and in the same language, the word *vertigo* (*ilingos*). This designation also includes the *vertigo* to be found in certain animals, particularly in sheep, many of the effects of intoxication, some dances like the waltz, and finally, the giddiness induced by high speed, the kind one experiences on skis, in a motorcycle, or in an open car. Powerful machines are necessary to give these sensations the kind of intensity and brutality that can cause giddiness in adults. It is therefore not astonishing that we had to await the industrial age to see *vertigo* really become a category of play. Actually, it is dispensed to an avid multitude by a thousand implacable machines set up in the market places and in the amusement parks. Here, small wagons run on rails whose outline forms an almost perfect semicircle, so that the vehicle, before it rights itself, seems about to fall into space and the passengers, tied to their seats, feel as if they are falling with it. Elsewhere, other enthusiasts are locked in a series of cage-like seats which balance them and keep them upside down at a certain height above the crowd. In a third kind of machine, the sudden release of a giant spring catapults a car, which slowly returns to take up its position in front of the mechanism that will catapult it once again. Everything is calculated to incite visceral sensations of terror and of psychological panic: speed, fall, shocks, accelerated gyration combined with alternating climbs and descents. A final invention makes use

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of centrifugal force. This force is applied to the wall of a gigantic cylinder of unsupported bodies, immobilized in all kinds of postures, paralyzed, while the floor slips away and descends a few inches. The bodies remain "stuck together like flies," as the establishment's publicity reads.

These machines would obviously have exceeded their purpose if it were merely a question of exacerbating the organs of the middle ear upon which one's sense of balance rests. But the entire body is subjected to the kind of treatment that anyone would fear if he didn't see others falling all over each other in similar fashion. Indeed, it is worth our while to observe people as they leave these machines. They are pale, they stagger, they are on the verge of nausea. They have been shrieking with fear, they have been breathless, and they have had the terrible sensation that all their insides, their very vitals, were afraid, were curling up in an attempt to escape from some horrible attack. Yet, even before they have calmed down, most of them rush off to another ticket-window to purchase the right to suffer once again the same torture from which they expect enjoyment.

TABLE I

	AG ÔN (competition)	ALEA (chance)	MIM- ICRY (pretense)	ILINX (vertigo)
PAIDIA noise agitation laughter dance hoop solitaire games of patience cross-word puzzles ↓ LUDUS	races combats etc. athletics boxing fencing football checkers chess	<i>comptines</i> heads or tails betting roulette lotteries, compound- ed or par- layed	childish imita- tion masks costumes theatre	children's swings merry-go- round teeter-totter waltz outdoor sports skiing mountain- climbing

NOTE: In each vertical column, the games are classified very approximately in such order that the *paidia* element constantly decreases while the *ludus* element constantly increases.

I say enjoyment because I hesitate to call such rapture diversion; it is far more akin to a spasm than to a pastime. Thus pleasure and the quest

for vertigo exist when the latter is the object of *play*; when, in other words, it occurs under precise and fixed circumstances, isolated from the rest of reality, and when one is free either to accept or refuse it.

It seems legitimate, therefore, to inscribe the term *ilinx* next to *agôn*, *alea* and *mimicry*, in order to complete the picture of the motives of play. The penchant for vertigo must be added to those that are expressed, first, by an ambition to succeed solely through the meritorious agency of fair competition; second, by a resignation of the will in exchange for an anxious and passive awaiting of the decree of fate; and third, by the illusion of being cloaked in another's personality. In *agôn*, the player relies only on himself and he bends all his efforts to do his best; in *alea*, he relies on everything except himself and he surrenders to forces that elude him; in *mimicry* he imagines that he is other than he really is and invents a fictitious universe; *ilinx*, the fourth fundamental tendency, is an answer to one's need to feel the body's stability and equilibrium momentarily destroyed, to escape the tyranny of perception, and to overcome awareness.

The variety and fertility of the games that tend to satisfy these cardinal temptations attest to their importance and to their permanence. It is certainly not rash to suggest that psychology, along with sociology, will derive useful additions and instructive lessons from a study of games.

## INDIVIDUALITY, LEADERSHIP, AND DEMOCRACY

There is a growing concern in the western world with the nature and function of democracy, a concern induced by outside pressures of conflicting ideologies and by internal development of protective devices. The latter source of concern, which finds its highlight in America in congressional investigative techniques, has its origins in the practical and political arena. The issues it raises are tremendously significant for the future growth of democratic processes of government. The struggles which it has released will be a long time abating. But behind these local issues of democracy there lies a more subtle and less popular difficulty, the difficulty of harnessing enlightened political consciousness to the broad-based electorate required by democratic theory. This particular difficulty is not without its practical ramifications and applications; in fact, it is the nub of the struggle over investigative techniques in America. But the problem of uniting political wisdom with an extended franchise has a closer connection with the theory of democracy than does the problem of technique of investigations: it raises, in fact, the critical theoretical question of whether democracy is possible. Put more carefully, the question to which I have reference asks whether democracy is possible as government directed from below by the electorate, or from above by the intelligentsia.



on

The philosopher, George Santayana, has for long argued against the first alternative in favor of the second, as indeed have many of his philosophical predecessors, among them Plato. But more recently, sociologists and political theorists have directed their attention to this question.<sup>1</sup>

The modern forms of democracy have raised this problem of political wisdom in large part because of the growing size of the political unit, which not only reduces man's liberty by making him a unit in a large mechanism, but also tends to render impotent the individual's ability to select or to become a leader.<sup>2</sup> Such impotency is brought about through several causes. One direct result of the size of contemporary forms of democracies is that political life issues from the movements of large groups. The men put up for office are usually not selected by the mass of the electorate but rather by a small power group acting within some definite organization. Power groups give rise to pressure groups and their consequent concern to persuade regardless of the facts of the issues or the talents of their candidates. Advertisements have been placed at the service of political parties; television programs to catch the eye but not the mind replace debates and careful weighing of objective evidence. The situation becomes more hazardous in virtue of the complexity of the issues, a complexity which requires even more imperatively intelligent and well-informed voters and leaders than in the past. But the chances of obtaining, through popular vote, the leaders needed to guide the country become increasingly fewer. Add to this situation the many factors tending towards conformism and uniformity and the problem of generating political wisdom from below begins to appear nearly impossible of solution. The typical personality trait is what Riesman has called "other-directed," the follow-the-leader pattern which supplies the cues for action through the group to which the individual belongs. Individual initiative becomes stale, judgment stereotyped. The ideal of equality which motivated democracy in its inception now turns into an equality of mediocrity. Culture in the honorific sense becomes replaced by uniformity. "One way of defending

1. David Riesman, *The Lonely Crowd* (New Haven, Yale University Press, 1953) and *Individualism Reconsidered* (Glencoe, Ill., Free Press, 1954), Karl Mannheim, *Freedom, Power and Democratic Planning* (New York, Oxford, 1950); Max Beloff, in *Encounter*, Spring, 1954, and *The Times Literary Supplement*, June 18, 1954, which carries an editorial on Beloff's article.

2. We must not overlook the point made by Riesman that the very "impersonality" of our present day society is sometimes a releasing mechanism freeing us from the strains of sociability (*Individualism Reconsidered*, pp. 34-35). But in the context of the voter facing political decisions, the impersonality and size of the group to which the decision refers hampers the freedom and the precision of the judgment.

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the democratic ideal is," Santayana cynically observes, "to deny that civilization is a good."<sup>3</sup> Modern mass society has fathered a "homogenized culture."

Like nineteenth-century capitalism, Mass Culture is a dynamic revolutionary force, breaking down the old barriers of class, tradition, taste, and dissolving all cultural distinctions. It mixes and scrambles everything together, producing what might be called homogenized culture. . . . Mass Culture is very, very democratic: it absolutely refuses to discriminate against, or between, anything or anybody. All is grist to its mill, and all comes out finely ground indeed.<sup>4</sup>

The Stranger in Santayana's Dialogue on self government traces the source of such homogenization to the cult of fashion: "There is nothing that recommends any opinion or custom to us more than to hear that it is the latest thing, that everybody is adopting it, and that it is universal nowadays in the leading circles."<sup>5</sup> Fashion, conformity to the ruling norms, finds its current exemplification in the round of loyalty oaths and discriminations which permeate our present-day society from top (governmental agencies and academic circles) to bottom (civic organizations, women's clubs, community projects).

Two ideals at least have pervaded modern forms of democratic polities, that of liberty and that of equality. Liberty has been interpreted in a negative way as freedom from constraint: that government is best which governs least. In economics, it has been the laissez-faire doctrines which have given expression to this form of liberty. Liberty has embodied the individualistic strand of democracy; each man is to have the freedom to do what he wishes so long as it does not encroach upon the freedom of his fellows. Equality, on the other hand, has formed the expressive pattern for the conforming and non-individualistic tendencies. Equality and liberty struggle together as defining traits of modern democracy, with now one and now the other dominating and establishing the personality of a period. But even the individuality tends to come in standardized varieties: e.g., the avant-garde artist has now become typed, and that fashion demands its own conformity for those who chose to follow it. There are faces in the crowd but the crowd tends to determine the shape of the face. There would be nothing alarming or paradoxical about the double play of individual and crowd if the leadership role were typified along genuine leader-

3. *The Life of Reason* (New York, Scribners, 1954), p. 144.

4. Dwight McDonald, "A Theory of Mass Culture," *Diogenes* No. 3, July 1953, pp. 11-12.

5. *Dialogues in Limbo* (New York, Scribners, 1926), p. 94.

like patterns, but the result of the pull of fashion is usually to stay on the surface with any particular type. Thus the avant-gardist need not bother too much about his proficiency so long as he fulfills the behaviorial expectancies. Similarly, the political leader finds it necessary only to appear in the traditional role, and in general make a show of leading while actually following what he takes to be the wishes of the crowd. There is very little demand for, and hence little supply of, leadership. Some of the lack here is traceable to a vagueness in the criteria of democratic leadership: "is a parliament a central exchange for current demands or is it an *élite* commissioned to govern justly?"<sup>6</sup> Santayana's *Stranger* finds this kind of dilemma tragically characteristic of democracy: "it is the tragedy of those who do as they wish, but do not get what they want. It is the tragedy of self-government."<sup>7</sup> Behind the fashion fads, behind the peculiar characteristic of democracy where "no man governs himself in anything, but . . . each is governed in everything by all the others,"<sup>8</sup> there lies for Santayana the theoretical mistake of democracy which leads inevitably into the death of culture and the death of leadership qualities. The emphasis upon equality leads toward communality and commonness, while the stress upon classlessness leaves everyone with a rudimentary education but no taste for culture and no desire to have leader-personalities to violate the inviolate value of equality.

Genius, like goodness . . . would arise in a democratic society as frequently as elsewhere; but it might not be so well fed or so well assimilated. There would at least be no artificial and simulated merit; everybody would take his ease in his inn and sprawl unbuttoned without respect for any finer judgment or performance than that which he himself was inclined to.<sup>9</sup>

In the conviction that every man is as good as the next, we sacrifice distinction and merit for a levelling equality. The process is of course discernible in present day society and especially in America, only as one of the dominant directions of contemporary democracy. Santayana would not have claimed that his analysis of the theoretical evils of democracy was fully verified by the actual practice of democracy in any country. While he may be said to be outdated in his continued criticism of democracy for these evils, that being out of touch with living democracies he has failed

6. *Dominations and Powers* (New York, Scribners, 1951), p. 389.

7. *Dialogues in Limbo*, p. 93.

8. *Ibid.*

9. *The Life of Reason*, p. 148.

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to see the various practical ways in which these tendencies are being avoided, I do not think these observations militate against the force of his analysis. For he speaks of a tendency which has become real enough in many areas of our society. What he has not shown is that the tendency towards homogenization is inherent in the nature of democracy rather than being a particular temporal problem which must be met and resolved. His conviction in the connection between theory and practice in this respect finds its counterpart in his belief in the inseparable relation between culture as an honorific term and aristocracy. "What we have rests on conquest and conversion, on leadership and imitation, on mastership and service. To abolish aristocracy, in the sense of social privilege and sanctified authority, would be to cut off the source from which all culture has hitherto flowed."<sup>10</sup>

Behind most political theories there can be found a view of the nature of man which molds the general outlines of the theory. Hobbes is perhaps the clearest example of this close relation between sociology and political theory; for the social contract, the rigid social controls, and the power of the ruler all follow for him from man's being essentially selfish, motivated by fear and glory. Locke's milder social polity derives from his more sanguine view of man; man for him even in the state of nature is for the most part law abiding and has rights and duties. For Locke, the political society carries forward what the state of nature began but did not finish, while for Hobbes, the State quells through power the constant conflict of those who live outside its bounds. It is more difficult, because of the greater diffusion, to state what view of man's nature lies behind modern democracies. That this view is sanguine cannot be doubted; it is much too sanguine for writers like Reinhold Niebuhr.<sup>11</sup> The doctrine of inalienable rights born with man or bestowed upon him in virtue of his being a man also functions to determine the social structure in present day society.<sup>12</sup> The function of the political group is then interpreted as the protection and extension of these rights, as providing the proper environment within which they can be expressed and made consonant with the general social aims. But it is the weakness of recent trends in democratic society that these beliefs have not been realized to their fullest extent in the social structure. The difficulties over the extension of rights arose, in part at

10. *Ibid.*, p. 144.

11. *The Children of Light and the Children of Darkness* (New York, Scribners, 1944).

12. The defense of natural law is by no means dead. See also Leo Strauss's recent *Natural Law* (1954).

least, in the age of liberalism, in the nineteenth century, where material comfort ran beyond social and individual development. During this period "the people had been freed politically and individually by being given the vote, and enslaved economically in being herded in droves under anonymous employers and self-imposing labour leaders."<sup>13</sup> The quest for equality in all phases of life seems frequently to outdistance the extension of freedom. Individual diversity which requires freedom for its protection and nourishment has often been ignored and stifled by a standardization equal at the same time in material comforts and moral principles.

This ideal of a perfect ultimate democracy rests on two assumptions: that human nature in all men is essentially similar, and that consequently mankind could not fully develop its vital liberty without coming to a unanimous vision of the world and a cooperative exercise of the same virtues.<sup>14</sup>

Liberty constitutes a fundamental value for Santayana, but he insists that it must be used to develop and protect the natural diversities in men. Nature herself is hierarchical; men vary in what they value; goals change according to individuals. The good society must, for Santayana, preserve this diversity.

It has been a flagrant violation of human nature to try to force one form of life upon all men. As Riesman points out, "the idea that men are created free and equal is both true and misleading: men are created different; they lose their social freedom and their individual autonomy in seeking to become like each other."<sup>15</sup> Santayana was convinced that it is precisely this domination of other-directedness which is inherent in the democratic ideal as a political unit. What he seems to have overlooked, or to have deemed inadequate, is that in actual practice democracy has not required an agreement on basic moral principles.

Yet the fact is that our democracy, like that of Switzerland, has survived without securing such agreements. In our country, this has been attained by a party system that serves as broker among the special interest groups: the parties do not ask for agreement on fundamentals—certainly, not on ideological fundamentals—but for much more mundane and workable concessions.<sup>16</sup>

Santayana's point, however, is that the survival of political democracy should not be taken as the development of social democracy. The party

13. *Dominations and Powers*, p. 319.

14. *Ibid.*, p. 351.

15. *The Lonely Crowd*, p. 373.

16. *Individualism Reconsidered*, p. 36.

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system has worked in many countries of the west as a means of expressing various and diverse attitudes, but it has just as assuredly served also to submerge minority groups as well as to transfer individualism to "groupism." There is no hope for a solution, within existing political structures, for this dislocation of individuality, as far as Santayana is concerned. The only possibility lies in a return to smaller and more natural groups, to the ideal of social or spontaneous democracies exemplified in frontier groups, primitive societies, or disaster units where people cooperate willingly and for definite purposes, without losing their individuality. The spontaneity of such groups can be extended to define the nature of social groups *per se* by following what Santayana distinguishes as the rational order of society. This order must not be forced, as all political democracies have tried to do. It is

a purely vegetative growth in the psyche, that easily spreads by contagion to a group of psyches, and forms a political party or philosophic sect. The germ of this political growth is not itself political but biological and moral: it is the seedling of the life of reason sprouting within the secret self, and spreading as it finds the psychic soil favorable and the surrounding climate clement and sunny.<sup>17</sup>

Santayana's own presuppositions concerning human nature come to light in his ideal of moral communities, bound together by the similarities of interests and goals of their members and rooted in the natural growth of the internal and hidden psyche. What the individual is and should be is determined by the psyche. Each man is split into two, the real and the superficial self. Spontaneous democracy which unites individuals according to their real self-interest merges the superficial and real self. Thus, good government is determined not by "the topmost wishes" or "the ruling passions" of individuals but "by their hidden nature and their real opportunities."<sup>18</sup> If we must have political governments—and Santayana is romantic enough to find them objectionable (the most democratic of governments is "no government at all")—they must be run by an élite who have the knowledge of the hidden nature of the members. When democratic governments talk about representation, they confuse mechanical with moral representation.

17. *Dominations and Powers*, pp. 295-296.

18. *Dialogues in Limbo*, p. 106.

A government is not made representative or just by the mechanical expedient of electing its members by universal suffrage. It becomes representative only by embodying in its policy, whether by instinct or high intelligence, the people's conscious and unconscious interests.<sup>19</sup>

The best representative is the member of a spontaneous democracy, a truly moral society, since any member of such a group in speaking his own mind expresses the true interests of every other individual in the group.<sup>20</sup> For one person to be the moral representative of another requires the utmost skill and insight and may even necessitate his violating the present wishes of the one he represents. Government is always a superimposition of a political organ upon a natural society. Whereas Hobbes and Locke—and most of early Western tradition in political theory—have found it necessary to move beyond the state of nature, Santayana's primitive romanticism compels him to argue that what is required in the modern world is a return to natural units, to an idyllic state of nature. The utopian standard envisaged by Santayana consists of a world of many and diverse communities, each with a modicum of political and governmental machinery, working within themselves for common goals, expressing shared mores and rituals. In *Dominations and Powers* he toys with the possibility of uniting these many units under one general political control to form a genuine united nations, but he does not really have much faith in the practicability of such a unified world. Cooperation on such a grand scale is at best tenuous and short lived. Democratic cooperation, whether in the soul or in the world state, rests upon absolute unanimity.

Where any superficial diversity of thought or will cannot be reduced to agreement by a moment's reflection, a dualism is established between that part of the soul or of the people whose will is done, and that part whose will is defeated and ignored. Then to say that the soul or the people governs itself can mean only that the power that dominates it is native to it, and one strain in its own life.<sup>21</sup>

Domination then replaces rational control.

Santayana's moral societies demand the very agreement on fundamentals that he criticized political democracies for trying to attain. The obvious difference in his own mind is that the agreement in his ideal would arise naturally from the psyche, while it is always forced and unnatural in political democracies. He assumes, in his political analysis, a Roycean

19. *The Life of Reason*, p. 142.

20. *Dominations and Powers*, p. 385.

21. *Ibid.*, p. 409.

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concept of "community," a group of kindred souls possessed with a common past and shared goals. Social analysis is thus extended by making society, as Plato had said it was, the individual magnified. The success of society depends upon the leader's ability to know the individuals with whom he must deal, to anticipate their needs and the goals which will be expressive of their real selves. Utopian though Santayana's social ideal is, it serves the important function of directing our attention upon the need for a prior analysis of the individual. His faith in the individual does not allow him to find in every person, or in the large groups of persons characteristic of modern forms of democracy, the qualities of leadership; some must lead by understanding those they lead, while others must follow. But Santayana's goal ceases to be utopian precisely at this point with his emphasis upon the qualities within the individual necessary for proper leadership, for political intelligence and insight. Recent sociological analysis supports Santayana in this emphasis. Mannheim also believed in the necessity of a strong ruling class, even within the democratic ideal. But it was the degree of access to this ruling class which characterized for Mannheim the nature of a democracy.

In our view the quality of a society should not and cannot be evaluated by the presence or absence of a ruling class but by its methods of selecting leaders, the range of opportunities for ascent, and the social value of leadership functions in the ruling class.<sup>22</sup>

He strongly advocates scientific methods of testing for leadership qualities (I.Q. and aptitude tests, case studies in schools, etc.), calling attention to the presence of such methods in civil service employment. Neither is he adverse to open competition as one method of selecting leaders, as long as this does not become the only method. But all methods of testing for leadership will be ineffective unless there is leadership material already in existence.

Obviously a change of heart is needed and a new mental climate to encourage, not suppress, men of ideas and vision. In other words, a democracy on the defensive must be turned into one that is constructive and militant. Intellectual initiative, of course, can come only from men who are open to change and can view things in a new perspective.<sup>23</sup>

It was one of Santayana's keener insights to have perceived that the fate of modern democracy depends upon just such intellectual initiative, which

22. K. Mannheim, *op. cit.*, p. 93.

23. *Ibid.*, p. 106.



he felt was inevitably killed by the social pressures for equality. Our contemporary "other-directed" culture indicates that the problem of leadership is one of how to encourage the other-directed personality to become autonomous. For Riesman, "the 'autonomous' are those who on the whole are *capable* of conforming to the behavioral norms of their society . . . but who are free to choose whether to conform or not."<sup>24</sup> The difficulties of leadership arise on the individual level. If we do not have a social atmosphere which encourages those personality traits requisite for leadership roles, we can hardly expect to provide society with strong, virile leaders. But the effort towards autonomy in the individual is very much like the demand Santayana made for knowing the true nature of the individual. What has apparently happened to many individuals in other-directed democracies has been a piling up of superficial play-acting to fulfill the demands expected by society from the individual, both in his work and in his leisure. The end result has been that the individual has lost his capacity for working or playing as he himself would like to, has lost the insights into his own self.

The individual striving for autonomy also needs a great deal of self-consciousness to differentiate between actions he takes because they will be tolerated and those he takes because he really wants to. Indeed, it is just this type of heightened self-consciousness that, above all else, constitutes the insights of the autonomous in an era dependent on other-direction.<sup>25</sup>

The socialization of the individual has gone too far. The individual today must re-individuate himself.

His autonomy depends not upon the ease with which he may deny or disguise his emotions but, on the contrary, upon the success of his effort to recognize and respect his own feelings, his own potentialities, his own limitations. This is not a quantitative matter, but in part an awareness of the problem of self-consciousness itself, an achievement of a higher order of abstraction.<sup>26</sup>

False personalization in work relations and enforced privatization in play are two of the strongest barriers that, for Riesman, prevent autonomy. His own suggestion is that autonomy will first have to be achieved in the area of play, where the individual can learn again to make his own choices freed from the directives of social pressure. Work must also be de-per-

24. *The Lonely Crowd*, p. 287.

25. *Ibid.*, p. 305.

26. *Ibid.*

*Individuality, Leadership, and Democracy*

sonalized by use of the machine so that the false pressures of personalization can be redirected to other more profitable uses. Only after the individual has regained his autonomy will he be in a position to exert judgment unguided by other-directed forces. Riesman does not wish to suggest that political imagination and wisdom will follow automatically once autonomy has been achieved among individuals, but he would seem to have singled out an important prerequisite for regaining genuine democratic leadership.

Santayana would not, I think, be willing to accept a translation of his doctrine of the psyche into social terms. He would not allow us to say that the terminology of "real self" and "superficial self" has its only meaning in the social context, for his psyche is a biological determinant of both individual and society. But Riesman's concept of the other-directed self and of the autonomous self do translate Santayana's distinction into more acceptable and clearly realistic terms. The demand which Santayana criticized in the traditional concept of democracy, i.e., that all the members of society must believe in the same fundamental principles, becomes the major criterion of a good society in his own utopian construction. There has been no violation of his own basic belief in the value of diversity, however; for with the concept of a Roycean community of shared values and goals, there is, in Santayana's analysis, a strong insistence upon individual diversity. His point is that there can be no diversity over long-term goals and initial values without some domination and undemocratic action occurring. There is still some divergence between this analysis of community and the heterogeneity which Riesman finds actual and possible within the democratic polity; but when we translate Santayana's analysis of the individual into Riesman's terms we find a fundamental agreement. There has been a divorce of the individual from himself; he has been split by both public and private forces peculiar to modern forms of mass democracy. The goal of re-structuring democracy in order to achieve competent leadership selection and leadership roles lies in bringing this severed self together, in making it possible for the autonomous individualistic person, characteristic of Santayana's social or spontaneous democracies, to become the dominant socialized personality.

## REVIEW ARTICLES

Jacques Nicolle

### ON SYMMETRY

Having observed manifestations of symmetry in the world around them, men took pleasure in making use of them in their artistic reproductions and in their techniques. During the course of the centuries scholars have studied the attributes of symmetry in order to establish a perfect axiom, self-sufficient, and able to provide the solution for numerous problems. Just as trigonometric relationships can be used to measure the distance that separates the place one occupies from another place, often inaccessible, so it is possible, by a study of symmetry, to know in particular the spatial constitution and the attributes of certain molecules without having direct access to them.

*Symmetry* signifies "with measure" (*sun*: with, *metron*: measure) or, in its generally accepted meaning, exact proportion, measurability, parity, and harmony.

*Asymmetry* (from *a*, the privative prefix) denotes a "lack of symmetry." An asymmetrical body is one which possesses no symmetrical element whatsoever.

*Dissymmetry* (from the prefix *dis*, bad or difficult) is a term used by Pasteur as early as his first studies on crystals. In the mind of that scientist, a molecule is dissymmetrical if it possesses neither a design nor a center of symmetry, yet it may have axes of symmetry.

Symmetry is an equilibrium (the diverse levers, the balance), which

Translated by Elaine P. Halperin.

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controls the stability of objects. It is indispensable to our means of transportation—an airplane that suddenly loses a wing is a dramatic example of this!

Without going into developments of too mathematical a character, let us simply state here that symmetry can be applied to finite or to infinite figures. A solid cube, all of whose surfaces are equal to each other, is a simple example of the first category, while a roll of wallpaper upon which the same pattern is repeated at regular intervals represents an infinite figure, since the design on it can be reproduced by *transfer* as many times as one wishes. The face of a cube occurs similar to itself only four times if the cube is turned on an axis passing through the center of the two faces perpendicular to the axis so chosen. We can say that in finite figures symmetry consists in the *repetition* of one *part* of the object itself. In concluding these brief technical observations, we must point out that symmetrical operations are divided into two entirely distinct categories. The first comprises *transfer* and *rotation* (and the combination of both, the *helicoidal* movement) which yields figures called *congruent*, the kind that can be overlaid. An illustration of this is the movement of a hand in space. Operations of the second kind are *mirage* and *inversion*. They produce figures called *enantiomorphic* (of contrary form), figures that cannot be overlaid, for example, the right and left hands. Operations of the first kind, it should be noted, permit you to change from a first to a second position in a continuous fashion, while operations of the second kind are absolutely discontinuous. You cannot pass by means of a series of displacements of your person to its reflection in a mirror.

With these very brief definitions in mind, we shall now see how men made contact with the idea of symmetry in nature.

Because of the existence of weight, the appearance of a design of vertical symmetry is an absolutely natural thing. If one spreads over the ground sand made up of grains of different categories (the heaviest falling first), horizontal stratifications would occur and thus one would witness, if the heap is even, the appearance of a *vertical design of symmetry*. Men, most of the animals that live around us, and numerous plants represent a design of this kind. It is quite certain that the existence<sup>1</sup> of this design among men predisposes them to react more naturally to such a symmetry and obliges them to utilize this attribute in their construction of buildings

1. "Symmetry is what one sees from a point of view based on that which there is no reason to make otherwise and based also on man's shape, which explains why one desires symmetry in width only, not in height or in depth." *Pensées*, Pascal, p. 25.

and furniture.<sup>2</sup> However, although we do not generally notice the presence of this attribute, we are surprised when it is missing; for example, we are struck by the lack of symmetry wherever we customarily encounter it, as in an automobile that lacks a wheel or a man who has lost a leg or a setting different from the others on an impeccably arranged table. To see again a face that one recognizes makes an impression that can be either pleasant or unpleasant but which, in either case, does not leave us completely indifferent.

The existence of identical twins is an example of symmetry that is well known to everyone. In monozygotic twins (issued from the same egg and therefore of the same sex), one encounters an opposite tendency (symmetry in relation to a design) of certain elements. If one of the two has a right eye that is larger than the left, the inverse might be true of the other twin. The same could hold for the way the hair grows or for fingerprints. If historians are to be believed, Johann Sebastian Bach's father had a twin brother who resembled him so closely that their respective wives found it difficult to tell them apart. They both had the same talent for music, were often ill at the same time, and died almost simultaneously.

A more detailed analysis provides us with numerous cases of symmetry in the three kingdoms of nature. Among the animals, we encounter radiating symmetry in the Heliozoa, which are practically spherical. The Foraminifera have spiral shapes which, according to the species, are either right or left (the enantimorphic objects of our introduction). The Coelenterata possess axes of the 6 and 8 kind and the Echinodermata axes of the 5 kind (a symmetry not found in crystals). Man and the vertebrates, however, must content themselves with a simple vertical design!

It is also important to observe the labor of animals: spiders' webs are symmetrical in relation to a design if one disregards the two spirals, but it is mainly the bees that teach us geometry.

The following is a quotation from the work of Professor Léon Bertin, *La vie des animaux*: "Apparently no one observed the rhomboidal form of the bottom (of the bee-hive) before the eighteenth century. In 1712 a nephew of Cassini, Maraldi, an astronomer at the Observatory of Paris, determined the angles of the lozenges precisely and experimentally. He

2. The symmetry of the human body is merely an approximate one. If one reproduces the two right or the two left sides of a face on a photograph (which can be done most easily by means of a mirror placed perpendicularly to the portrait) the effect obtained is often monstrous. The right side of the face is olive-shaped and the left almost spherical. These very special reproductions apparently enable one to exteriorize certain characteristics and are employed in some countries for the purpose of criminological research.

found them equal to  $109^{\circ}28'$  and  $70^{\circ}32'$ . Réaumur suspected that the bees must be guided for reasons of economy, in the construction of the bottom. He suggested to the German geometrician, Koenig, without first acquainting him with Maraldi's findings, the resolution of the following problem: 'Among all these hexagonal cells of the bottom composed of three equal rhombuses, determine which cell can be constructed with the least matter.' Koenig dealt with the problem by differential calculus and found that the angles of the lozenge must be  $109^{\circ}26'$  and  $70^{\circ}34'$ . This much agreement with Maraldi's measurements is already quite surprising; but there is still more. In 1743, MacLaurin proved that Koenig made a mistake in his calculations and that, in resolving the problem one discovers that the correct measurements of the angles are precisely those indicated by Maraldi and achieved by the bees—in other words,  $109^{\circ}28'$  and  $70^{\circ}32'$ . After this, should one not write on the top of the bee-hive this phrase so dear to Pythagoras: 'Let no man enter here unless he is a geometrician'?"

In the vegetable kingdom we observe innumerable cases of symmetry which everyone can easily recognize, particularly among flowers and fruits and also in the posture of trees. The growth of vegetables can assume various forms. The most simple cases are those concerning elongation in cylindrical or conical shapes, but there are also spherical growths and those that present spirals which, according to the case and to the species, can develop into right or left helices. We must quote in passing some studies on phyllotaxy which deal with the more or less regular arrangement of leaves around a stem. Curiously enough, this problem has concerned a very large number of thinkers, artists or scholars, such as Leonardo da Vinci (1515), Robert Brown (1658), Malpighi (1675), J. W. Goethe (1749-1832), Bravais (1837), d'Arcy-Thompson in 1942 and Lucien Plantefol in 1945. All the scholars who preceded Plantefol in this investigation claimed that the growth of leaves around a stem formed a kind of spiral (this term is employed here in the popular and not in the mathematical sense of the word). In going over the curve in question, and in measuring certain sizes concerning the number of leaves they found between determined intervals, they attempted to identify their results with those of a known series in mathematics, called the Fibonacci series. The recent studies of Professor Plantefol have enabled us to establish that in reality the leaves are scattered over several helices surrounding the stem and not over one unique curve. This is an illustration of the danger that exists in the field of science when one attempts to verify preconceived ideas at any price!

But it is above all in the mineral kingdom that the best and most char-

acteristic examples of symmetry are evident. When men acquired knowledge about the bowels of the earth they were struck by the peculiar arrangements of the polyhedrons whose admirable geometric patterns they encountered. It was in the study of crystals and their properties that the doctrine of symmetry achieved great progress. This it did by effecting a harmonious synthesis between the data of pure mathematics compiled by numerous researchers and the observations of mineralogists, crystallographers and geologists.

Impressed by the relationships and the attributes of symmetry, man naturally was led to utilize multiple combinations of them in the arts and in the sciences in order to embellish and improve his life.

In the arts man concentrated on reproducing the various manifestations that he had observed in the kingdoms of nature, conceiving, as well, many different combinations. It is impossible to develop here the theories of symmetry in regard to art, one interesting example being the evolution of symmetry in theatrical scenery throughout the centuries.

In ancient times the architecture of the theatre embodied the usual pattern of vertical symmetry, this being true as well for scenery designed for the stage. In the Middle Ages the "miracle" and "mystery" plays in the various places where they were produced employed a device that was called the "simultaneous scene" as distinguished from the customary "successive scene." During this period no characteristic plan of symmetry existed, but one notes a symmetry that stems from symbolism (the three divisions: heaven, earth and hell) or from repetition (the stations of the Cross).

The symmetrical plan returned with the Italian humanists of the Renaissance. The great problem was that of perspective. The following quotation from Pierre Sonrel's excellent book contains some curious details about the work of the great scenic designer, Sabbattini:

"First of all Sabbattini placed upon the stage canvasses upon which façades of houses were drawn and painted. His design was limited only by the dimensions of the theatre, which he made as large as possible in order to leave room for the actor's entrances. The height and the details of the houses were as yet undetermined. Into the center of the rear wall of the stage and at the level of the Prince's eye, he hammered a nail. From the Prince's seat and at the level of his vision he drove another nail into a post. Finally, he connected these two nails with a string that served as a line of vision. Then, a light in his hand, he moved to the left of the string to fix the

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line of the canvasses on the right. He next did the same on the opposite side. His assistants then drew the shadow that the string cast upon the canvas frames at various levels, determining thus the height of the roofs, the cornices, windows, balconies, doors. With the aid of a second horizontal string suspended perpendicularly to the first, Sabbattini thus obtained all the other lines of his construction directly on his canvasses. An empirical method, undoubtedly, but quick and ingenious, useful to his contemporaries who resorted to perspective without always possessing its secrets."

During the classical period, no matter what play was being given, the backdrop, which represented a palace, a triumphal arch, a garden, or some other such place, was handled in an absolutely symmetrical manner. But, as Hélène Leclerc observed in her very fine work, *Les origines italiennes de l'architecture théâtrale moderne*, Servandoni replaced the "symmetrical view" of the seventeenth century with the "oblique view"—an example of the influence of the Baroque trend of the eighteenth century.

In keeping with the wish to break "deliberately" with the symmetry of the latter part of the last century (melodrama), we have now returned to a great variety of concepts. I believe that a number of decorators in our day are seeking a certain symmetry (balance and harmony in forms and in colors) and are blending it quite rightly with the room that they are supposed to "dress."

We must add that symmetry is also to be found in the very composition of our plays. The classical theme, for example, provides us with the unfolding of two parallel actions of two pairs: masters and servants mixed up in analogous intrigues.

As René Bray has indicated, "the rhythm is of major importance in Molière's comedies, just as it was in the *Commedia dell'Arte*. The comic fragments are handled with skill, as the function of play and not of intrigue, and in accordance with a cadence that stems almost from the choreography."

Apropos of this, we owe it to ourselves to point out that symmetry is employed currently in the art of the dance. A dancing couple can represent a "transferred" symmetry when the two partners carry out similar movements (the two right legs moving together in the same step), or else a "mirrored" symmetry (symmetry in relation to a design) when they execute opposite movements, one turning to the left and the other to the right. If we think of a group of chorus girls who in unison reproduce the same pattern at a given moment, we can see that we have here too a



characteristic effect of symmetry by transfer, but achieved in a dynamic manner reminiscent of the frieze of a decorative design that has been executed in a static manner.

In his *Dictionnaire raisonné*, Viollet-le-Duc expresses himself in the following terms: "Symmetry today means in the language of architects not a balance, not a harmonious relation of the parts to the whole, but a similarity of opposite parts, the precise reproduction to the left of an axis of that which is to its right. One must render this justice to the Greeks, authors of the word 'symmetry': they never gave it such an empty meaning." I believe that this is mainly a quarrel about words. It is quite certain that in all times architects and decorators never limited themselves to considering the kind of banal and oversimplified symmetry that consists in flanking the clock on the mantelpiece with two identical candlesticks. Rather, they attempted in a much more subtle fashion to enlarge the notion of right and left in the form of an equilibrium, of a mass relationship. Measurable relations exist between the sizes of objects that we use for our pleasure. In particular, the candlesticks made by the famous Germain were all fashioned in the proportion of four to seven from the base to the top. Furthermore, the size of the base was never less than the fraction six over eleven. We should remember that in decorative patterns the symmetry of colors (their balance) plays as important a role as the symmetry of geometrical forms. In my opinion Oriental rugs owe their beauty to the fact that they possess what I would call a pseudo-symmetry. They are never fashioned perfectly from the standpoint of pure geometry; the colors change progressively from the beginning to the end of the rug, apparently in order to exorcise the evil eye!

The question of right and left has often been brought up in regard to painting as well as to scenery. The historian of art, Heinrich Wölfflin, demonstrated, using famous examples, that something of a peculiar nature is often to be found on the right-hand side of painting that does not exist at the left. I have often myself experimented with projecting reproductions of paintings on a screen both on the right and on the left side. Most of the audience, made up of people who had no special training in art, realized which was the correct side. And so one can say that very often the average observer (if he is not left-handed) is attracted by what is on the right side rather than by what is on the left. This theory in regard to painting, which fully accords with the opinion of René Huyghe, was rather amply developed by the German physiologist, Wilhelm Ludwig, in his book entitled, *Das rechts-links Problem im Tierreich und bei Menschen*.

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In this connection it is interesting to remember that Goethe, in his rules for the theatre, indicated that to make a dramatic impression, the scene must be laid in the courtyard and not in the garden. An inquiry that I am conducting at the moment in competent artistic circles confirms this opinion. I must also call attention to the numerous observations demonstrating that people who are racing on foot, on horseback, in a car, on a bicycle or on ice skates, always turn counter-clockwise. Such examples only confirm this distinction between the right and the left, a distinction which often appears when one remarks upon scientific research that takes into account the attributes of symmetry.

Louis Pasteur showed that bodies (that were called racemic) are capable of dividing themselves by certain methods (which this scientist indicates) into two components, a right one and a left one, and each the image of the other in a mirror. Pasteur calls attention to the very important fact that the material objects that we encounter can be divided into two categories: "In the one case, objects placed in front of a mirror reflect an image that can be superposed on them; the image of the others cannot cover them, although all their details are faithfully reproduced. A straight staircase, a stem with distichous leaves, a cube, the human body—these are in the first category. A curved staircase, a stem with leaves that grow in spirals, a screw, a hand, an irregular tetrahedron—these fall into the second category. The latter have no symmetrical design."

On the other hand we know that composite bodies are aggregates of identical molecules, themselves composed of elementary atoms distributed according to laws that regulate their nature, their proportion, and their arrangement. The individual component of every composite body is its chemical molecule, which is a homogeneous group of atoms with a very definite arrangement. All physicians envisage the constitution of bodies in this way.

Once this is understood, it would surely be surprising if nature, so varied in its effects, and whose laws allow for the existence of so many species of bodies, did not offer us, in the atomic groups of composite molecules, both of these two categories which include all material objects. In other words, it would be truly extraordinary if there were not some individuals with superposable images and others with non-superposable images among all chemical substances, natural or artificial. And this is actually the case, all chemical combinations without exception being distributed equally into the two categories stated above.

In nature, this manifests itself in a particular way, since one currently encounters only one of the component elements—for example, glucose and most of the sugars in the form of the *right* constituent, asparagine and the bodies called amino-acids in the *left* form. Why this is so is impossible to explain here. To do so it would be necessary to go back to the beginning of the world and to examine the reasons why a particular orientation happened to be given to the body in question. However, we must point out, as Louis Pasteur has done, that we find ourselves in a dissymmetrical universe. Actually, our globe turns in a definite direction on its own axis and around the sun; the terrestrial magnetic field is oriented. It is therefore natural, from our standpoint (since a phenomenon can spring only from a dissymmetry) that we do not find the molecules of left and right bodies equally distributed, as purely statistical considerations would dictate.

We are indebted to the great French scientist, Pierre Curie, for very important works on the relation of symmetry to physical phenomena. Just as Pasteur established a theory of molecular dissymmetry, so Curie demonstrated that for a phenomenon to occur, certain elements of symmetry must be nonexistent. If we place two equal and parallel iron blades in acidulous water and if we connect these two elements by a conducting rod, we do not obtain an electric current. But if we magnetize one of the blades a current may be produced, and, actually, experiments show that it is produced. It would be the same if the two blades were made of different metals.

Let us heat a crystal of tourmaline under a gas flame for a few seconds, and then place it on a glass slide. Let us blow a mixture of sulphur and red lead powder onto the crystal. The sulphur which is electrified negatively by being breathed upon fastens itself to one of the pyramidal extremities of the tourmaline. The red lead, positively electrified, will become fixed at the other end. Thus one obtains a crystal presenting a yellow "pole" and a red "pole." Electricity has differentiated between colors! This stems from the fact that by means of heat or pressure (in the case of piezoelectricity) one is able to develop electrical currents of a different voltage.

The three examples show, as Pierre Curie has often said, that it is dissymmetry that creates the phenomenon. He added the following remarks: "It would be much more logical to call a design of dissymmetry any design that is not symmetrical, to call an axis of dissymmetry any axis that is not a symmetrical one, etc., and in general to give the list of operations which are not recovery operations of the system." [He is referring to finite groups.] "But in the groups under consideration, there are an infinite number of

operations of recovery; and so it is much simpler to supply the list of these operations."

Curie has demonstrated by experiments and by discussion of a theoretical nature that when different and naturally diverse phenomena are superposed, the final system that results embraces solely those elements of symmetry which are common to each of the systems under consideration. He also showed that the symmetrical elements of causes are to be found again in the effects produced. "The dissymmetry of effects," he says, "must be recovered in the causes." But we must call attention to one remark of his that is of major importance: the reverse is not true, and effects can be more symmetrical than causes because certain causes of dissymmetry apparently are not effective.

A fine experiment made by the German physicist Wiedemann consists in superposing an electric and a magnetic field and in demonstrating that the resultant phenomenon no longer possesses more than those elements of symmetry that are common to the two component phenomena. All that would remain in space would be an axis (called isotropy).

The following is the experiment in detail:

1. If a metal wire is magnetized lengthwise and one shoots an electric current through it, the wire bends.
2. Let us take the same magnetized wire and twist it. At this moment, an electro-moving force springs up in the wire that has been shot through with a current, provided it is placed in a closed circuit.
3. A wire shot through with a current is entirely magnetized lengthwise when it is twisted.

Let us now go on to chemical biology. We note with some surprise that microbes can differentiate between a *right* and a *left* body.

In 1857 Pasteur observed that certain mushrooms utilized the right composite of tartaric acid and that the left remained intact. Since this memorable discovery, numerous studies have been made on the subject which show that microbes accept the right bodies of the series of sugars as a source of carbon and the left bodies of the series of amino-acids as a source of nitrogen. We have even demonstrated during recent years that the right bodies (called right antipodes) of certain amino-acids that are not adaptable to the micro-organism in question possess a certain inhibiting power in regard to the cultures of certain microbes. It is interesting to point out in this connection that "nonnatural" bodies are to be found in various antibiotics.

We must add that sight is not the only means we have of distinguishing the diverse forms of symmetry; taste and smell perform this function as well! It is through these two senses that we can recognize the orientation of molecules. The word molecule is particularly apt here since it is thanks to the molecular scale that we can smell the slightest trace of a subtle perfume in a large theatre. In the physiological domain one has always observed obvious differences in the taste of the *right* and *left* components of the same body. Without going into a detailed discussion, we would merely like to point out that as early as 1886 Piutti demonstrated that one of the antipodes of the asparagine has a sugary taste, while the other is tasteless.

These principles of symmetry can very often be applied in scientific research. When a chemist attempts to establish the representative formula of a body, he frequently finds himself in the presence of numerous combinations; he can make a selection only by relying upon the different characteristics which diverse methods provide. However, a good knowledge of the principles of symmetry immediately enables him to eliminate a very large number of schemata, thus facilitating his task. A great many physical constants, which nowadays are obtained with great accuracy, are directly connected with the symmetry of the bodies studied. Rotative power, the existence of the piezo and of pyro-electricity and even the temperature of fusion provide us with useful information concerning the structure of bodies. Microbes themselves are capable of distinguishing the degree of symmetry of the products that they need. We have shown by a great many experiments that these organisms can utilize the right or left antipode of a body, but not both. But even more remarkable is the fact that the "bad" antipode is in many cases an inhibitor of microbic growth, its effect being like that of the antibiotics.

Hence, everywhere, and in all domains, we encounter this notion of symmetry, among living beings as well as in the mineral kingdom. The relationships it imposes determine a great many phenomena.

We must add that mathematics is not a pure creation of the mind. The elements of this science happen to be within our reach, and we discover them when we analyze the world that surrounds us and to which we belong. The symbol  $\pi$  (the ratio of the circumference to the diameter) is one of the constituents of our universe; it is not something that mathematics invented. All the attributes of symmetry, all the relationships which this discipline presents, exist independently of us. As we have shown, perhaps

too rapidly, symmetry is a powerful and subtle means of investigation; it aids scientific progress and enables us to resolve problems, the solution of which would not otherwise be directly accessible to us. It shows us the possible structure of those constituents of matter which our senses do not reveal—at least not at the present moment.

Science traversed successive stages before assuming the appearance it has today. In the beginning men observed the world that surrounded them. Afterward they began their experiments. The means of producing fire was the first great discovery. Then, in the course of the centuries, came the three other fundamental discoveries: steam, electricity, atomic energy.

Observation at first played the principal role. Experimentation and then prediction followed. We have seen, in the course of this brief exposition, that man was called upon to encounter in various domains very numerous manifestations of symmetry (twins, flowers, crystals). Next we saw that he was able to utilize the attributes of symmetry in their artistic representations in order to fashion the utensils and objects he needed. Afterward he began to experiment. Thanks to quartz crystals (and to those properties of crystal that are directly connected with symmetry), it became possible to produce the ultra-sounds that enabled man to take soundings of the bottom of the sea and thus to detect submarines. Pasteur's accomplishments in the most diverse domains stemmed directly from his first studies on molecular dissymmetry. Now we have arrived at the stage of prediction. Pierre Curie, as we pointed out, established propositions which demonstrate that by making use of the attributes of symmetry, one can ascertain whether the realization of a phenomenon is possible or not. I believe that in time we will be able to determine, in many cases, the biological attributes of certain molecules when we acquire knowledge of the precise role of their groupings in relation to questions of positions in space.

Problems of right and left in art as well as in science force us to reflect upon the privileged orientations that we encounter in the world's system—the rotation of the earth and the stars in a definite direction, the appearance of the first molecules of certain bodies in either the right or the left form, the predominance of the right hand over the left. These are fascinating problems, which demonstrate that what exists is not "sciences" but only Science and its applications. Let us repeat, on the subject of this very special discipline with which we have here dealt, the remark of the great physicist Louis de Broglie: "Symmetry constitutes one of the most important orientations of contemporary scientific thought."

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## MEN AND THEIR HISTORY

On July 10, 1834, Michelet said to one of his classes at the Collège de France, "In history things happen the way they do in Sterne's novel, what is being done in the drawing room is also being done in the kitchen. Exactly like two congenial watches of which one, two hundred leagues away, marks the hour while the other chimes it." He added the following example: "It was no different in the Middle Ages. Abelard's philosophy chimed liberty while the communes of Picardy marked it." A few years later Berlin students could hear Ranke on *Epochen der Neueren Geschichte*, Droysen on *Enzyklopadie und Methodologie der Geschichte (Historik)*. Both of them rejected the philosophy of history that Hegel had attempted to impose; in their view, the historian must try to discover the *leading ideas of history*. Today Fernand Braudel aims at less ambitious objectives: "Our role, fellow historians, is to be first of all, on solid ground, in contact with things and beings, with what is visible, what can be proved and what can be objectively established. At the crossroads where we find the groping social sciences, all the contacts that one establishes with facts, figures, statistics, increase our doubts more than our certainties. Now, is it our fault if our wider curiosity seems to raise rather than resolve new and fascinating problems in which the precise role that the mysterious laws of numbers can play is unknown?" These lines of Fernand Braudel, extracted from the conclusion of one of the monuments of modern historical science

Translated by Elaine P. Halperin.



—*La Méditerranée et le monde méditerranéen à l'époque de Philippe II*—sheds light on one of the major concerns of present-day historians; of those who, five years ago, celebrated the fiftieth anniversary of the establishment, by Emmanuel de Martinne, of the first university "Laboratory of Geography" at Rennes; of those who, a year ago, gathered to celebrate the seventy-fifth birthday of Lucien Febvre to whom historians, linguists, geographers, economists, sociologists or ethnologists offered, in homage, a *Fan of Living History*. But, you might say, others before them have evidenced an interest in what is visible, what can be proved and established objectively, notably those who, trained in the school of a Lavissee or a Seignobos—to say nothing of Sorel or Bourgeois—today represent the declining "historical history." Undoubtedly, but nonetheless a fundamental change has taken place. Where is it to be found if it is so true that one can say with Thibaudet that great upheavals are to be construed as mere choices on the level of intelligence? Our concerns are neither with the "philosophy of history" (who, incidentally, ever believed in it?) nor with the "science of history." What we must envisage lies elsewhere.

In 1897, Seignobos and Langlois published an *Introduction aux études historiques* which, for a long time, was considered a bible. According to them, the historian could be compared to a landscape painter anxious to omit nothing—except his own person, except that which makes an event a human reality. One must admit that they are not without some justification, that they are in the same position as Cournot, Paul Lacombe, Ranke, Burckhardt, Fustel de Coulanges—but not Michelet, who today finds himself to be what he never should have ceased to be, the Master. Undoubtedly history is written "with texts," but without texts prehistory writes the longest chapter of the human adventure. Undoubtedly a knowledge of economic history requires statistics, but how can one understand them if one is totally ignorant of technology or the social significance of a salary and price curve? It is useless to separate ideas from the men who expressed them, institutions from those who built them, words from what they signify in everyday life—not for linguists, but for peasants, workers, and business people. Thus, every reflection on the evolution of historical science from the beginning of the century collides with the problem of facts. For a long time it was accepted as dogma that the scholar was a man who, putting his eye to the microscope, immediately apprehended facts that he had only to record, classify, and date. But what is a fact? It can be compared to a point in geometry. Just as the point has no meaning in itself, just as it is merely the result of an intellectual operation thanks to

which imaginary lines intersect each other, just as it possesses no significance except in terms of the lines whose intersection it defines, so the historical fact is merely the expression of a convergence of currents. In his preface to *Trois essais sur Histoire et Culture* by Charles Morazé, Lucien Febvre writes: "History does not turn up its nose at facts. . . . But architecture is no more made of bricks than history is of facts. No architecture without an architect's plan. No history without a working hypothesis." This parallels Magendie's remark: "I walk about in it like a rag man and at every step I find something interesting to put in my hut," with which Lapique compared Dastre's remark: "When you don't know what you are looking for, you don't know what you will find."

Charles Morazé, in his *Trois essais*, strives to show all that is represented by a precise fact: the advent of Jules Ferry as head of the French government. This fact brings into play the entire economic and social evolution, the recruiting of the political personnel, the training of men. To make Jules Ferry's advent possible a certain opinion had to prevail. This opinion was inspired by the events of the preceding years as well as by the economic situation, in which American or African developments played their part; a certain harmony between world events and French events had to exist. Saint-Dié, Jules Ferry's birth-place, is the key to those valleys of the Vosges where Alsatian industrialists settled after 1871; they sought in India a cotton which, for some time, the United States had ceased to provide. Mulhouse was, therefore, a place where Protestantism was active (Siegfried and Freycinet were Protestants, and so were the founders of l'Ecole des Sciences Politiques)—at a time when the silver currency of Catholic Austria was being devaluated because of the huge sums that had come in from the Far East and from new mines on the other side of the Atlantic. This weakening of Catholicism in France resulted in the "rallying" of Leon XIII who, at the same time, and even though he was the victor of the Kulturkampf, advised the German Catholics to support the imperialist policy of their sovereign. Why should not this weakening of Catholicism be related to the land crisis which suddenly decreased the value of farms in all countries, caused an agricultural recession in the United States and the ruin of numerous provincial aristocracies in France? Yet everywhere, in the United States as well as in Europe, a new upward movement of urban civilization was manifesting itself. Is not the simultaneity of agricultural crises and upsurge of cities a general phenomenon? Isn't it true that technology makes the most rapid progress during a period of crisis—that it aids the development of urban civilization while

agriculture remains as sensitive to the pedological and climatic changes as it was during prehistoric times? And so what we might call "the Ferry fact" seems to be an expression of a very complex economic and social ensemble. It was around the time when Ferry acceded to power that growing quantities of wheat and meats from the other side of the Atlantic were being unloaded in French ports—raw silks from the Far East, flax and hemp from eastern Baltic. This is a far cry from the usual and simple chronological dissection. Louis Halphen—one of the champions of "historical history"—believes that in this domain science consists in finding the chain of firmly established facts, that this causality is enough to constitute "a rigorous science." But no Providence exists to provide historians with the kind of raw facts which are endowed with a simple and irreducible existence. "As for historical facts," Lucien Febvre says so excellently, "it is the historian who brings them to life . . . in such a way that we know that this assemblage of facts—which is so often presented to us as raw material and which automatically should constitute history transcribed at the very moment when the events occur—has a history of its own which is the history of the progress of knowledge and of the historians' awareness. In order to accept the lessons events offer, we have the right to demand that first we should have some contact with the critical work that paved the way for the chain of these events in the mind of whoever evokes them."

For a long time historians made a fetish of facts. Their task was to gather as many as possible, to classify them according to well-determined categories of activity: internal or foreign policy, economic and social life, etc. Then a man appeared who was not a historian but a geographer, Paul Vidal de la Blache. Modern geography was born from his meditations on the maps that he studied, on the field that he cultivated unceasingly, on the books of nineteenth century German geographers, notably Alexander de Humboldt and Karl Ritter, and those of travelers and of "curious people": Darwin, Cook, Bougainville, Marco Polo, Worsae, etc. Vidalian geography stemmed from history. It emerged from the framework of the more or less descriptive nomenclatures to attain the level of an exploratory science of the conditions which the various regions of the land presented and continue to present to life, of the economic activity of human societies. From that time on great books appeared: Raoul Blanchard's theses on *La Flandre* (1906), Albert Demangeon's on *La Picardie* (1905), Jules Sion's on *Les Paysans de la Normandie orientale* (1909), etc. Meanwhile, in 1908, Vidal de la Blache published his *Tableau de la géographie de la France* in Lavis's *Histoire de France*, and in 1922 Lucien Febvre dropped his bombshell, *La*

terre et l'évolution humaine, which once again took up the whole problem sometimes erroneously thought of as that of "determinism." During this period Marc Bloch was already preoccupied with agrarian history. Undoubtedly there were agricultural historians, but they were content with erudite classifications (forgetting, for example, that for the peasant world, the Middle Ages extended at least until the night of August 4). They concerned themselves more with their records than with the peasants. Marc Bloch went beyond abstractions and chronological trivialities to deal with realities, to probe human problems, states of mind, different kinds of lives, hopes and disappointments, resignation and revolts, resources, currency, etc. He quickly recognized that he could not limit himself to French frontiers. With Lucien Febvre and Henri Pirenne of the famous *Discours sur l'histoire comparée*, he sought outside of France the solution to the problems he encountered in France. He analyzed as many of the old texts as possible and learned about the realities of agricultural life, the rotation of soil cultivation, peasant techniques. He explored the immense domain of governmental land surveys and of the systems of strip farming: why fields were uniformly elongated in one place and square and massive in another; why they were enclosed by hedges in one place and devoid of trees or hedges in another. How much could be explained by geographical factors and how much by human intent? Could one go back as far as a Brittany of open fields, without hedges or ditches, similar to the Beauce or Champagne areas? In 1929 he and Lucien Febvre founded the *Annales d'histoire économique et sociale*, with the help of Henri Pirenne, Sir William Ashley and Albert Demangeon—men who rejected the dried up disciplines of the purely factual. Everything began with this movement of the *Annales*. Everything, including *War and Human Progress* by John U. Nef, *Studi di storia economica medievale* by Armando Sapori, *American Treasure and the Price Revolution in Spain (1501-1650)* by Earl J. Hamilton. One of the features on which not enough emphasis has been placed, from our point of view, is the convergence of different disciplines which this concept of history implies. Two great associates of Bloch and Febvre were the geographers Jules Sion and Albert Demangeon. In 1932, denouncing the errors made by Ellen Churchill Semple in *Geography of the Mediterranean Region* (which aggravated those in *Influences of Geographic Environment*), Jules Sion wrote: "The geographer should not embark upon such large and formidable topics. The mere fact that he has a different training and curiosities other than those of the historian can lead him to hope that he will be able, at times, to indicate new points of view, to bring up an old prob-

lem by emphasizing natural factors that were hitherto neglected, to raise problems even though he is not qualified to resolve them. He must think as a historian as well as a geographer." This was also Demangeon's opinion. Just as the geologist cannot know the surface facts unless he knows the deeper ones, the exegete of human societies—the geographer is only that—must first know the phases prior to their evolution. Such was also the opinion of Henri Pirenne, the man who inspired this comparative method, who urged that the historian's interests should embrace a larger space as well as a longer time span.

But whence, then, do the impulses of individuals and of the masses emanate? Let no one misunderstand the meaning of this question. When one studies the relationship between human beings and their geographical environment one soon realizes the necessity of considering groups, not individuals. The proper unit of research is the group—a position that history confirms by demonstrating that as far back as the earliest times "we see, not isolated men in action, but groups of men." (The quotation is from Demangeon.) Indeed, achievements such as the development of irrigation in Mesopotamia and in Egypt, the domestication of animals, etc., must have been collective enterprises. "Geographically, man acts and possesses significance only in groups," Vidal de la Blache wrote in his *Principes de géographie humaine*. The individual is never more than his era and his social environment permit him to be. One can say therefore that the social environment permeates the author of a historical work, encloses him, in a large measure determines him—and when this work is achieved, it survives only through the collaboration of the masses, the impact of the milieu. And so we find ourselves far from the kind of history that is confined to a few notes carefully filed, from the kind of history which, seeking solutions at all costs, forgets the problems. Around 1880–1890, history was understood to be merely a method—the critical method—which enabled historians to dispense with the necessity of asking themselves, what is history? The sociologists attacked it. The Durkheimians annexed everything which, in their opinion, lent itself to rational analysis. All that remained for history was chronology; it could only result in careful accounts, in multiple details, and in "forgetting nothing." Valéry had an easy time of it, since it was understood, once and for all, that the appearance of the discount at the beginning of the seventeenth century or that of electric lighting in the country were no more important than a diplomatic congress that arrived at tentative solutions. But it is true that Valéry had not read a line of Bloch, of Hauser or of Pirenne and that he

### Review Articles

was as ignorant of *Les Chroniques gall-romaines* by Julien as he was of Sion's *Etudes Méditerranéennes*.

In 1933, Lucien Febvre, who occupied the chair of general history and historical method which the Collège de France had just reestablished for him (it had been abolished in 1892 at the death of Alfred Maury), issued this manifesto: "History, a science of man and not at all a science of things or of concepts. Who professes ideas external to men? Ideas, merely elements among many others in the mental baggage packed with influences, recollections, speeches and conversations which every one of us carries around? Institutions, isolated from those who created them, who, while respecting them, are forever modifying them? No. There is no history save that of man, and history in the largest sense of the word." One must therefore rediscover the men who experienced the events to which one refers, penetrate to the human substance of the words, and not be satisfied with texts. Is it possible to study ancient peoples without a pollinic analysis of the tides and of the bog-waters?

Little by little the reality of the social, that underlying reality of man, imposed itself. All the social symbols to which we had been accustomed lost their substance. Intellectual concepts were distorted or destroyed. A new world—why not a new history? It is not a matter of disavowing the reality of events or the role of individuals; that would be puerile. But no one is entirely self-contained in a living reality. All individual experiences are based upon the complex reality of the social—an interlocking reality, as the sociologists say. The problem therefore is not to disavow the individual on the pretext that he is stamped by contingencies, but to go beyond him, to distinguish him from forces that are different from him and so to react against a history reduced to the actions of a few quintessential "heroes." Treitschke believed that "men make history." History also makes men—a profound, silent and anonymous history whose task is to attack social realities in themselves and for themselves: in other words, to attack the great forms of collective life—economies, institutions, social structures, civilizations.

In 1951 Fernand Braudel and Ruggiero Romano published *Navires et marchands à l'entrée du port de Livourne, 1547-1611*, in *Ports, Routes, Trafics*, one of the new collections begun by the *Centre de recherches historiques*, a great innovation since the aim of the Center is "to assemble within a solidly organized framework, a group of researchers whose efforts are joined and who are capable of working together as a team on those collective projects without which certain zones of history—not merely economic

history—would never be surveyed.” The following year, in the collection entitled *Monnaie, Prix, Conjoncture*, Carlo M. Cipolla presented *Les mouvements monétaires dans l’Etat de Milan, 1580-1700*. In *Affaires and gens d’affaires* Armando Saporì evoked *Le marchand italien au moyen âge*. A major impetus had been provided. But lest people think that economic history alone is involved we will take, for example, the Florence of 1580 to 1585. There we observe a crisis which increases and becomes overwhelming. This is attested by the repatriation of Florentine merchants who left France and North Germany, abandoning their shops in order to buy land in Tuscany. The crisis could be verified only when coherent series of prices had been established. Was it merely Tuscan or general? It was noted in Venice and Ferraro. Therefore one must journey to all the archives of Europe—at a time when the Far East controlled the circulation of precious metals and hence the rhythm of the entire economic life of the world. Difficult years in the Far East for the trade in spices and pepper coincided closely in time with these years of Florentine crisis. This trade passed from Portuguese hands into those of Moorish merchants, the old frequenters of the Indian Ocean and of the Sunda Isles, then into the hands of the caravan drivers of India, to disappear, finally, in Northern Asia and in China.

Thus the crisis of the century involved not only Venice or Lisbon, Antwerp or Seville, Lyons or Milan, but also the economy of the Baltic, the old rhythms of the Mediterranean, the currents of the Iberian Atlantic or Pacific. On the one hand, the fifteenth century, on the other the seventeenth, it was concerned not only with the general movement of prices, but also with the cluster of these prices and their comparison. The prices of wine and of landed property preceded the others in their decline. Here lies the explanation of that civilization of vineyards and wine, the increasingly numerous northward departures of ships loaded with wine casks from Seville, the Portuguese coast and the Gironde—as well as the rows of tilted carts, the *carretoni*, which brought wines from Friuli and Venetia into Germany via the Brenner. This was also the period when artillery was installed on bridges of ships, when tonnage decreased, when the small Greek, Provençal or Scandinavian sailboats carried cargoes heavier than the large Venetian or Ragusan ones. It was also a time when the meaning of death changed. Alberto Tenanti has shown the deep chasm that materialized then. For a “celestial” death, turned toward the hereafter, a wide open door through which man passed without too much fear, there was substituted a “human” death, already marked in an initial way by reason. Slow to show its true countenance, this death seems to have arisen long

before in the Rhenish areas; we find ourselves here in contact with the silent history of civilizations, far from the customary décor of the Reformation. One must read the pious books and the testaments, collect all the iconographic proofs and consult the papers of the *Inquisitori contra Bestemmie* in Venice, those precious "black archives" of moral control.

For a long time, under the influence of Max Weber's *Die protestantische Ethik und der Geist des Kapitalismus* and of R. H. Tawney's *Religion and the Rise of Capitalism*, it was acknowledged that modern capitalism was born of Protestantism. The reasoning was as follows: although Catholicism accepted the exchange of one commodity for another, or the sale of a commodity for money in order to buy another (therefore the Marxist sequences M-M or M-A-M) it rejected A-M-A and regarded A-A as a "mortal sin." (A-A: the Bank.) This is true but inadequate. One must still explain the "see-saw" movement which transferred the world's economic center of gravity from the Mediterranean to England. John U. Nef appears to acknowledge that the religious factor is sufficient to explain the contrasts, at the time of the Thirty Years' War, between the economic development of the southern Low Countries and that of the northern Low Countries. He likens these contrasts to those that existed in the same epoch between the states that had formerly been subject to the sovereignty of Charles V and the countries of northern Europe. Nef seems to concede that the religious explanation suffices. This factor was operative, but it alone cannot constitute a principle of absolute causality. In a commercial market dominated by Spain's loss of control over the precious metals, by crises of conjuncture which resulted in instability of a structural order, banking techniques underwent a real change: the contract of exchange was transformed into the letter of exchange, which became a negotiable and discountable instrument of trade. Modern finance dates from this technical change. One must also bear in mind the expansion of large-scale maritime and colonial commerce. London was victorious over Amsterdam. On March 26, 1714, John Freeke published the first weekly stock quotations. Joint-stock companies multiplied. England was experiencing then what was known as "the first industrial revolution," characterized in the main by the introduction of pit-coal as a major combustible of the industry. This industrial revolution marked the decline of the Mediterranean countries, which lacked this new form of energy. For a world centered upon the Mediterranean there was substituted a world centered upon Northwestern Europe overlooking all the oceans. This "industrial revolution" was not enough. One must bear in mind the "technological revolution" of the



eighteenth century, which was made possible by the transition from the world of the approximate to the universe of the exact, as well as by the birth of a technology. Machinism was born in the eighteenth century, when Greek science had not yet engendered a logistic. The horizons that open up are so vast that one is justified in wondering if research should not remain fragmentary in order to be valid. Everything must be reexamined and explored.

What, for example, do the *Lettres de negociants marseillais: les frères Hermitte (1570-1612)* which Micheline Bauland has just published contribute? First of all, we still have inadequate information about commercial activity in Marseilles during the sixteenth century. Furthermore, merchants' letters and papers are so scarce that one is justified in studying them minutely. They introduce us to the very core of the practices and realities of everyday life. One such letter, for example, dated February 20, 1589, which seems rather dull at first, contains valuable notations about the city of Marseilles and its place, about the role of Genoese silk buyers, about the importance of the exchange in Lyon, the attractions of Seville and Cadiz, the transportation of American cochineal to the Levant, silver rates in Marseilles, the sailings of ships to Alexandria and Tripoli, etc. In the same collection there have just been published *Le pacte de Ricorsa et le marché italien des changes au XVII<sup>e</sup> siècle* by Guilia Mandich and Simon Ruiz et les *asientos de Philippe II* by Henry Lapeyre. We are waiting for the letters that his correspondents in Antwerp wrote to the great merchant of Medina del Campo, Simon Ruiz; Valentin Vasquez de Prade has retranscribed the text. All the letters gain in meaning by being juxtaposed, compared to analogous documents, and thus immersed again in a "day by day" account of economic history, as explained by its actors. This kind of history generally has only a remote relationship to the portrayals that the great books, which style themselves works "of synthesis," offer—when they do offer them. We also have *Les Prix à Lwow (XVI-XVII centuries)* by Stanislas Hosrowski who, as early as 1928, was one of the first to deal scientifically with the great historical problem of prices, which Avenel, Thorold Rogers, Wiebe, and several others had treated in the most false and least scientific manner imaginable. This study teaches us that prices at Lwow rose vigorously and regularly from 1530 to 1600. In the case of cereals, the essential product, they quadrupled, just as they did in the rest of Europe. After 1600 their rise continued until at least 1650. Thereafter they began to decline. As for wages, they breathlessly attempted to keep pace with this rise and then began to decline before prices did. Thus real

wages in the conjuncture of the rise as well as in that of the fall, but mainly in the former, did not cease to diminish. It would be suggestive to compare this with the results obtained for Spain by Earl J. Hamilton, making allowances, of course, for geographical differentiations.

In 1501 Spanish imports rose to 0.6 million pesos, in 1601 to 34 millions. They thus increased from the index number 14 to 141. The first consequence of this massive arrival of precious metals was an immense and protracted rise in prices; the second, an acceleration of commercial activity. But what were the social repercussions, and how did they occur? According to regions, according to the more or less sturdy cohesiveness of social structures? It is unnecessary to emphasize the social consequences of that rise in prices. This is perhaps one of the factors that explains the orientation of the works of Ernest Labrousse, Marc Bloch's successor in the chair of economic history at the Sorbonne. The possessor of a great deal of economic knowledge, Labrousse approached Marx as an economist, an attitude so rare as to be remarked, and rather significant if we think of the discussions between Marx and Engels on the place which the chapter on *Value* should occupy in *Das Kapital*. Perhaps this played a part in determining Labrousse's penchant for the eighteenth century, the study of which he approaches through the intermediary of prices which, here as elsewhere, play a "revealing" role. To a large extent a good part of his current work owes its orientation and its strength to his doctoral thesis: *Esquisse du mouvement des prix et des revenus en France au XVIII<sup>e</sup> siècle*. From the very outset of the first volume of *La crise de l'économie française à la fin de l'ancien régime et au début de la Revolution*, he states in all its breadth one of the great problems of the history of human societies: "It would appear from the evidence of prices, whose meaning varies according to the era, that when a rise succeeds a decline, a crisis occurs in economies of the modern type which are dominated by metallurgy, or more generally, by commodities whose production tends to vary in the same manner as prices. A crisis occurs in economies of the old type, dominated by wheat and rye, or more generally, by agricultural goods whose prices tend to vary inversely with production, when a rise succeeds a decline or a plateau." We can see from this how much modern history is concerned with economic history. In all its domains—prices, production, distribution, profit, consumption—economic life is merely a succession of disequilibria, a chain of fluctuations of more or less protracted duration, of alternating rises and falls, of expansion and contraction, of prosperity and recession, usually classified according to how long they last. But one thing must be clearly understood:

the crisis is merely an accident in the cycle, a cyclical phenomenon. The crises of 1770, of 1782-1784, of 1789-1799, of 1795, of 1802-1803, of 1812, of 1817, mark the great moments of pre-revolutionary, revolutionary, and post-revolutionary economic history. We might add the crises of 1830 and of 1847: great economic moments can also be great historical moments. Whether relative or absolute, whether or not they exhibit an increasing seriousness, economic recessions are interpreted by contemporaries, who ascribe them to institutions or, more often, to men, just as they attributed or would attribute the credit for success to institutions and to men. An unfavorable economic situation creates an unfavorable political situation, all the more so as the evolution of private revenues is not without effect upon public revenues, hence upon the relative weight of fiscal burdens. The study of economic fluctuations, of those classified and hierarchized fluctuations all of whose nuances, "variables," and historicity are known—fluctuations whose uninterrupted chain spreads over the seasons, the years, the centuries—is one of the expansion and recession of revenues, of the variations in the material condition of men. These variations concern all of society, not only because they represent a great human event but because they are alertly perceived by men. One pays less attention to the state people are in than to their movements, less to the scale of living than to changes in it. Since the appearance of classes—or to be more exact, since the affirmation of class-consciousness—a multitude of men are more or less resigned to living "poorly," less to impoverishment or even to the mere aggravation of social differences. This economic movement is linked with all other human activities and, to a certain extent, controls them. The historian's problem is to examine and to determine this extent. For a long time it has been noted that a rising tide of wealth brings to the classes that benefit by it a large purchasing power which is used to buy luxury items, particularly intellectual and artistic products for which an enlarged and impatient clientèle competes. With wealth and education, the mentality and taste of the classes are transformed. These are not new ideas, but they are, to a very large extent, the consequence of movements of long duration. Cyclical movements are no less important; their historic dynamism is considerable. The cyclical crisis, in fact, is a natural period of unrest and of political difficulties of all kinds. We know that 1789, 1830, 1847 were years of crisis.

Pierre Leon's doctoral thesis, *La naissance de la grande industrie en Dauphiné—fin du XVIII<sup>e</sup>—1869*, fits into this perspective. It upsets chronology, for it takes us from the "economy of famines" to the be-

ginnings of the "economy of over-production." This economic history rightly reclaims economic frontiers: that of the early seventeenth century, largely at the point of contact with the medieval artisan class (with horizons opening on an economy which the eighteenth century was to modify profoundly)—that of 1869–1870, which marks the split between a long period of revolution and of industrial expansion that was ending and the period of contraction which was to follow and during which new techniques were to appear. Between the two lies the history of the survival and of the slow death of a certain artisan class at grips with commercial and industrial capitalism. The Dauphiné cycle coincides rather markedly with the national cycle; the great crises appear there in about the same periods. The crisis of the old economy begins with poor harvests followed by a rise in the cost of living which is climaxed by a cyclical maximum in grain prices. Simultaneously, industrial activity tends to decline: the high cost of living, the reduced rate of employment, the contraction of profits superimpose their effects. The second third of the century corresponds to the entry into an intermediate economic period, and until the end of the Second Empire one witnesses the "chain of catastrophes": spasms of grain prices and bankruptcies, agricultural crises and commercial crises persist in coinciding to a certain degree. And so, in spite of railways, in spite of the development of the metallurgical industry (whose rhythm of activity at times tended to prolong the crises rather than to shorten them), in spite of the improvement in working conditions, the functioning of economic society remained in very large measure unchanged. A considerable part of society was still threatened by catastrophes that were typical of earlier times; the simultaneity of food and business crises, of rises in the cost of living and drops in wage levels and employment. Over and above this regional framework the entire French economy of the nineteenth century becomes manifest. The crisis of agricultural underproduction seemed to play the role of the prime mover by unleashing a crisis of relative industrial underconsumption in an economy in which the metallurgical industry and even its suppliers, like the entire industrial economy itself, did not yet play a determining role. Here, by bearing in mind Simiand's observation that the "cause" becomes confused with the nonsubstitutable, or the least substitutable antecedent, one can succeed in understanding the origins of crises of the old type. Pierre Leon's study terminated at the date of a "birth," not of a maturation: all in all, the world of production had not yet completely freed itself from ancient frameworks, and society lagged, as it always must, behind the economy.

A fragmentary history? How could it be otherwise? How could one react otherwise than by working in the face of the failure of a would-be "philosophy of history" which did not concern itself with history—in the face of the sclerosis of a history which declared itself dedicated to facts but neglected to define them?

Does this mean that if one rejects "synthesis" one must return to narrow specialization? Certainly not. One of the great battles waged by the *Annales* against "*histoire-historisante*" was directed precisely against the state of mind that ends up by viewing only the wars of Louis XIV without situating them in their historical context, that makes one study the wars of Napoleon without bothering about the evolution that led to the concept of the citizen-soldier and to the development of military matériel and technology, to the establishment of timetables, to post-mortems on strategy, to regaining Wagram or losing Waterloo all over again. In 1933 Lucien Febvre spoke out against this spirit of specialization: "I have said: No, not sciences—those circumstantial and local combinations of elements that are often arbitrarily associated. Break up abstract frameworks, go straight to the problems that the non-specialist bears within himself, raise them for him and for others apart from all preoccupation with schools of thought. . . . In this way the unity of the human spirit, the unity of human uneasiness in the face of the unknown will be made palpable to all: a unity hidden by the multiplication of petty disciplines, jealous of their autonomy and clinging desperately to an autarchy as useless and as disastrous in the intellectual domain as in the economic. Let us prepare, when there is reason to, Treatises and Manuals of our respective sciences. This is a practical necessity. But they will have human value only if they are animated by a broad-minded spirit of scientific unity." As Simiand remarked ironically: "One does not discover the laws of meteorology by locking oneself within the four walls of one's garden!"

No matter how fragmentary they may seem, the works of economic history to which we alluded earlier are such only by virtue of their "matter" and not by virtue of their objective or their conception. It is quite evident that price movements are not all of history—but one cannot understand history without introducing them as an explanatory factor. There is no such thing as unilateral history. But there is such a thing as the history of price movements, just as there is of demographic increases, racial tensions, technological progress, economic rhythms, psychological eddies, or that diffuse spiritualism to which Ranke referred. Moreover, we should mistrust overhasty definitions. In *Die weltgeschichtliche Stellung*

des 16, Erich Hassinger makes Charles VIII's invasion of Italy and the "Northern Peace" the bounds of the sixteenth century. This is an indication of the interest which some people feel the problems of periodization—incidentally incapable of solution—deserve. George von Below defined these problems in *Ueber historische Periodisierung*, but he forgot that one could apply to chronological subdivisions Alain's dictum about numbers: "They are a quality not of things but of our minds." Hassinger, for example, neglects the extension of space, that renewal of horizons which was to overturn so many things, that substitution of Atlantic perspectives for Mediterranean ones. He likewise neglects demographic factors and price revolutions. Thus he ends up with a sixteenth century that is exclusively political and religious, which he sees as being "one." Actually, sixteenth-century Germany offers the historian the possibility of a twofold experiment: to reconstitute the entire life of a heterogeneous whole—to link this history of Germany with that of Europe and to see whether both of them did or did not accept the same rhythms. This is why the stress must be placed upon the history of structures and of conjunctures. Only an episodic importance should be given to great men and resounding events—to Maximilian or Charles V, to Dürer or Luther, to the Diet of Worms or the battle of Muhlberg. The study of geography and consequently of German diversity, the analysis of the mechanisms of the markets of Frankfurt on the Main and Leipzig, the description of the realities of material life, the demographic problems—all these are fully meaningful only when they are linked with classical portrayals and explanations of the religious, intellectual, and political life of Germany.

The study of conjunctures, according to the books of Wilhelm Abel and Elsass (whose conclusions at times call for some reservations) lead us to the core of this reconstruction. Actually, so far as Germany is concerned, the two centuries are split. The first, the sixteenth, begins around 1450 and ends about 1530-1540. The second extends to the beginning of the Thirty Years War which, according to the different regions, was more or less ahead of schedule, also more or less catastrophic. What remains to be done is to follow the transition from the first to the second of these periods, to analyze over and above traditional explanations those hinge-years from 1530 to 1550, from the *Reichstag* of Augsburg to the tomorrows of Muhlberg. In particular, is it possible to establish a relationship between the economic crises and the growing tensions of the religious and political situation? The most recent studies by German historians view this connection with a certain indifference. It seems to us that Germany functioned at

that time in accordance with the rhythms of Europe and of the world, and that the sixteenth century was similarly dualistic everywhere. Showing but slight animation until its mid-point had been reached, it seemed then to be roused by a wave of prosperity which excluded neither the surprises nor the sufferings linked with overpopulation, the rise in prices, and the continuous wage crisis. Did not Jacob Strieder concentrate too exclusively on the great epoch of the Fuggers and of Augsburg and neglect the last fifty years of the century—years so rich in material for study of structural changes, the displacement of industrial, transport, and commercial centers? An apparently sluggish Germany, lacking great men and historic dramas, was the scene and victim of multiple changes. Need one not seek historical reasons of a general order rather than purely German ones, to explain such a fate?

Similar problems confront one in regard to France, largely open at that time to the external world. There is an advantage—despite the contrary view of Lucien Romier and Pierre Champion—in explaining France not on the basis of a period of several years but through all the phases of the sixteenth century, in thus understanding her without reference to charts of events, in recognizing the rhythms of her conjunctures and the more or less permanent characteristics of her structure. All of these are considerations which, once again, lead one to reexamine the profound crisis of the middle of the century. For the conflicts, on both sides of this caesura, throw light on the entire destiny of the century. Would there not be some advantage in studying more attentively than has as yet been done, the social disturbances of the last decade of the century, the spread of the Reformation, the geographical localization of the first three religious wars, which would lead one to locate the entire importance of the “turning point” of 1568 in the history of French Protestantism?

However, it is necessary to give historical studies a chronological framework. This was the feeling of the promoters of the *Cahiers d'histoire mondiale* of UNESCO, edited by Lucien Febvre, who conceives of them as materials for a future “history of the world.” The formula is a happy one. The only people who may not like it are those who would prefer definitive answers to questions which they do not put to themselves, or the false security of the “Manual” to the indecision of the investigator. In a few months (thanks to André Varagnac) the first volume of a new collection, *Destins du monde*, will appear. It too is edited by Lucien Febvre. He wishes to break with concepts developed by those who clung to western frameworks, paying no attention to non-European mentalities—

without, however, giving the impression of omniscience. "It is better frankly to reveal our inability to conceive in its entirety, today, a true History of the World—and to curtail our ambition (if it really is a question of 'curtailment'), in order to study in concrete terms a certain number of the major problems which trouble and haunt us." But then what would the chronological frameworks be like? Is it possible to speak of world chronological frameworks—that is to say, to establish the existence, among parts of the world that have long been unaware of each other, of rhythms of growth and development susceptible of global interpretation? Voltaire made a bold gesture when he began his *Histoire de moeurs* with China, when, shortly before, Bossuet had begun his work with the people of Israel. This gesture had no sequel. The great work was something to think about rather than to execute because greater enlightenment is less important than a change in the realm of concepts.

The problem which thus arises is one of organizing, in terms of their presumable importance, the chaos of events, of introducing order into the mass of ideas and of facts, into the permanent and the contingent which make use of history, without, however, evidencing in any way a critical or discriminating approach. Such a task can be undertaken only by teams of researchers. It is necessary to launch converging investigations thought out in their entirety and begun simultaneously so that this or that monetary, transportational, populational or psychological phenomenon might be studied in the same spirit or within the framework of civilizations separated in time and space. Otherwise only a linear account is possible, which means subjection to the most outdated chronological frameworks and to the most arbitrarily schematized events.

All this is well and good, but what can be the utility of such a work—*what purpose does history serve?* Napoleon III answered: "History is war." True, if it consists of a series of intrigues and princely stratagems, of attacks and furors, of pillages and conquests directed by "heroes." History is actually the long sequence of efforts made by men to leave their imprint upon the planet, to adapt themselves collectively to physical and social settings which are perpetually changing. It is the effort of societies to arrange their past pragmatically, to project behind the images which they themselves form of their life, of their collective ends, of the qualities necessary for the achievement of these ends, a sort of prefiguration of this reality—simplified, to be sure, but endowed with a tradition upon which religion confers a sacred character. To understand history (which is infinitely more important than to learn it) is therefore to become aware of



the need men feel to organize the past in terms of the present, to project upon the past (at least upon that part of it which is known) the dreams and anxieties of the present.

This kind of history places no obligations on anyone, but without it nothing solid can be built. The architect is not forced to employ any special style because of the nature of the terrain, but he cannot build without knowing the terrain. The same is true of history, of the kind that is an atmosphere rather than a lesson.

It may be that great catastrophes are not the agents of real revolutions. However, they herald them and impose the obligation to reconsider various problems. The meditations of Saint-Simon, Comte, Proudhon and Marx stemmed from revolutionary upheavals. During the winter of 1871, Jakob Burckhardt wondered what subject he would deal with in the course he was about to give at the University of Basle. He chose the French Revolution, which he declared to be merely the first act, the beginning of a cycle. It was early in July 1940 that Gaston Roupnel constructed *Histoire et Destin*. When everything was crumbling, history, as Michelet had understood it, was starting all over again.

How can it remain outside of the world's upheavals, when its sense of the concrete has led it to revise its methods, to call upon all disciplines in order to succeed in achieving simultaneous awareness of time and space? It is by being problematical that history rediscovers life.

## BOOK REVIEWS

Louis Renou

### *The Art of India through the Ages*

BY STELLA KRAMRISCH

(London: The Phaidon Press, 1954.) Pp. 281.

### *India: Paintings from Ajanta Caves*

(New York Graphic Society, by arrangement with UNESCO, 1954.)

Publications on the art of India, which have appeared with infrequent regularity until recent years, are becoming noticeably more numerous and more thorough in regard to both research and photographic techniques. It is no longer possible to see in the artistic flowering of the subcontinent a mere temporary break in the tradition of the baroque and the ugly, as if all the spiritual values of India could find plastic expression only on the foreign soil of Angkor or Boroboudour. Thus the album *Inde: Images divines* (Paris: Arthaud, 1954), recently published by P. Rambach and Vitold de Golish re-

vealed, to all but specialists at any rate, "nine centuries (5th to 13th) of Hindu art misunderstood," in an admirable series of photographs.

In the field of research the school most active today is that grouped around Philippe Stern, concerning itself especially with the evolution of motifs—a study singularly fruitful both for the inner significance of the works and for problems of relative chronology, interaction, and sources. One of the most recent works of this school is that published by Mrs. Benisti, *Le médaillon lotiforme dans la sculpture indienne* (Paris, Publications du Musée Guimet, 1952),

while Mrs. Hallade has begun a study with a grouping in terms of themes and motifs, the basic materials of artistic production (*Arts de l'Asie ancienne*, vol. I, *L'Inde*, Paris, Guimet, 1954).

Recent full-scale studies are not lacking. Unquestionably heading the list is H. Zimmer's posthumous *Art of India: Its Mythology and Transformations* (New York, The Bollingen Series, 1955, 2 vols.). As in the author's other works of which this is an extension in a new perspective, myth and symbolic speculation form the central core; one recognizes the penetrating insight of a master whose lessons, although a bit too insistently sustained, are nevertheless endlessly suggestive.

A general work following the development of India beyond the frontiers of Hindustan is B. Rowland's *The Art and Architecture of India* (London, Penguin Series, 1953). This is a volume rich in well-chosen and well-documented illustrations, the text of which, however, is not up to the level of the most recent research on several essential points.

More satisfying in this regard, though less didactic, is the work of Stella Kramrisch, who has already given us a distinguished monograph on the Hindu temple (Calcutta, 1946, 2 vols.). *The Art of India* is remarkable first for the quality and the choice of its 190 plates, all carefully described and placed. These illustrations, often of little-known subjects, help the reader to grasp the complexity of art forms here pictured from their beginnings (as yet hardly Indian, it is true) at Mohenjo-Daro, to the graceful figurines of the 17th century and the miniatures of the

18th. The interesting introduction entitled "Traditions of Indian Art" is less concerned with conveying historical information, for which we do not lack manuals, than with establishing what the author considers the permanent conditions of artistic expansion. Mrs. Kramrisch emphasizes the primacy of religious forces, she sees in art a sort of projection of metaphysics. This leads her to underscore the predominance of a total art whose essential aspect is in architecture, that is, the temple. "In the fullness of its development, [the temple] establishes in spatial terms the intellectual and actual approach to the Supreme Principle of which the deity is the symbol. The statue is the manifestation of the deity through a concrete work of art, the building is its body and its dwelling. Images are given shape by sculpture and painting, whose interrelation expresses in line, proportion, and color, the love of the Absolute to which gods and myths owe their existence." Further: "The work of art is the body and the dwelling in which are revealed the Formless, the Beyond-form, the Point of Deliverance, and the Source of all Form." Statues and sanctuaries are stages on the road, the plastic world is one of the innumerable approaches to the supra-human condition.

The thirty-two reproductions of the Ajanta frescoes form a sumptuous album inaugurating a series of documents on the great works of art. I do not know whether the colors convey the impression of the original (or rather the impression they would make if seen in normal light); they may be closer to what these wall paintings were before

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time had taken its toll. In either case the impression is stunning. As Madanjeet Singh reminds us in his brief introduction, Ajanta corresponds in Asia to the Italian frescoes in western art; its mark is felt in central Asia and even further east. The most flourishing era seems to have been the fifth century, but certain works are clearly anterior to this, and the "digging" of the underground temple which houses them may have begun as early as the second century B.C.

The principal theme is of course the history of the former lives of Buddha. A concrete and familiar humanity is spread before us in the form of hagiographical fables, with a sort of spiritual patronage conferred by the presence of

the Bodhisattvas, symbols of wisdom and compassion. The great human themes are used, dominated by the idea of the precariousness of human existence.

Explanations accompanying each plate would have been in order; once the emotive shock is over, intelligibility is limited for those who don't know the legends of the old *Jātakas*. The detailed telling of these legends, with discussion of the probable age of each fresco and of the social and religious environment which conditioned them may be found in the final volume of G. Yazdabi's *Ajanta* (Hyderabad, 1933-1955, I-IV); this great work constitutes a true summit in the field.

*Pāli Tipitakam Concordance, Being a Concordance in Pāli  
to the Baskets of Buddhist Scriptures, Parts 1-5*

(London: Luzac, 1952.) Pp. 314.

The present work is the beginning of a vast chronicle (these five parts contain scarcely a tenth of the total) which aims to list under representative word-heading, alphabetically arranged, all the *formulas* constituting the substance of the *pāli* Canon, that is, of the sacred Scriptures of southern Buddhism. It is well known that among the various languages in which these Scriptures (sayings attributed to Buddha, rules of the primitive community, reflections on the "Law") were recorded, the *pāli* occupies a special place: it is, if not the only language used, the only one in which a complete Canon has come down to us. Despite research of the past fifty years directed more and more toward northern Buddhism, it is probable that, as was long believed, the *pāli*

version remains most faithful to the original teachings.

The *formulas* composing this extensive literary ensemble appear in various texts and reappear from paragraph to paragraph in the same text with a frequency which fully justifies the elaboration of a *concordance*.

The great basic texts of all religions are more or less repetitious. The Bible is no exception. While in profane works repetition is either avoided as an index of monotony or sought after (under particular conditions such as phonic assonances, etc.) for reasons of expressiveness, it is a fundamental element of religious texts. Péguy understood this, exploiting the almost piercing effects of repetition in his hieratic poetry. This is the emphatic form of repetition, con-

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sisting of similar or slightly varied *attacks*, the procedure which passed on into the classic ode. But alongside this emphatic repetition is a humbler type, formed of clichés, identifying epithets, and stock phrases; it is the procedure found in the epic (originally a partially religious *genre*), in Homer, for example, as in the great epic poems of India.

The Buddhist canon includes both types of repetition. We find whole sections, notably in the sermons, reproduced in one text after another in identical terms, as parallel developments echoing each other. We also find formulas of varying length which form the unvarying ground of a description. Above this monotonous base the slightest variation or singularity in a dialogue immediately stands out. There was doubtless the intention of creating an atmosphere, a décor; it also provided mnemonic exercise. This training which in our civilizations, where memory plays such a small role, is performed by directing attention to the new, the diverse, is acquired in the Orient by

means of mechanical repetition: one sees it in present-day India in recitations of the Veda, which are given out of order, backwards, etc.

The quasi-magical element in repetition, finally, satisfies a basic exigency of the sacred. The very intensity sought by profane art in the discontinuous, the surprise, the march toward a climax, is obtained in religious art by the incessant repeat, the particular resonance of the same motifs; thus it is related to the melodic lines which music retained much longer and more faithfully than did literary art.

If the present work is finished within a reasonable length of time, it will form a precious complement to the much too abridged *Dictionary* of the Pāli Text Society; it will furnish a sort of substitute, lacking the critical part, for Trencker's dictionary, which may well never be finished. In Indian philology where good research tools are too often lacking, this work will take its place beside the celebrated *Vedic Concordance* of M. Bloomfield.

*Les Gens du Riz (Kissi de Haute Guinée Française)*

BY DENISE PAULME

(Paris: Plon, 1954.) Pp. 232. Figs., Pls.

Twelve months of investigation in two expeditions enabled the author to present this picture of a contemporary black society. A society of obscure beginnings, with neither historical past nor anthropological unity, scarcely out of convalescence but relatively prosperous, it is forming new roots, recovering from the ravages and terror caused by Samory, who had cut it off from its previous existence.

When so many populations have disintegrated after contact with the whites, it is comforting to witness this group of 140,000 individuals who are again finding a taste for life. A handicap, witchcraft, we will discuss later. A present danger is to be seen in the economic changes caused by an ever growing need for money to pay taxes and provide the dowry paid to the father of the

bride. These needs are supposed to be met by coffee and "colatier" plantations, which can only be increased at the expense of land for rice, on which subsistence is based. As a consequence, people will go into debt. Denise Paulme underlines the danger of mortgaging rice fields at an exorbitant rate of interest; the practice if unchecked would soon deprive debtors of their fields. At the same time she suggests that the system be amended without upsetting native customs. This requires tact and understanding on the part of the authorities. The peace enjoyed by the Kissi for the past sixty years must be maintained, but if several generations of administrators, familiar with the region, its language, and its inhabitants, are succeeded by newcomers without experience or experienced only in totally

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different societies, a gulf of incomprehension and hostility will soon make itself felt. Events move rapidly in Black Africa and the over-all optimistic impression of the author may already have been modified.

The title is at first misleading, since one expects rice people to be yellow. But unlike East Africa, a stock-raising region, West Africa is indeed a country of sedentary farmers, attached to the soil, utilizing all its possibilities. Agriculture, a relatively more recent development here than in the Far East, is nonetheless solidly established, even though parched fields "bristling with tree-trunks, roots, and big stones" are far removed from the familiar image brought to our minds by the word "field." Agricultural procedures, more reasonable than they seem at first, are adapted to the nature of the soil, though irrigation is unknown. The author has already pointed out<sup>1</sup> the dangers of plowing this thin top-soil which is better adapted to the hoe. In the fields, worked by the men, and in the gardens, worked by the women, cereal plants and vegetables alternate: cassava, corn, sweet potatoes, taros, yams, peanuts, eggplants, and tomatoes, the last, along with various sorts of peppers, used as condiments. The variety of the above list is misleading; it represents scarcely more than supplementary planting. Rice remains king, each of its ten or so varieties with a particular taste and qualities appreciated by the native consumer. A Tonkinese peasant would shudder at what is done to this rice: carefully reduced to

flour by long, tiresome pounding, it is then cooked into a sort of pudding, seasoned, fortunately, with a spicy sauce.

It is surprising to find a black society without art, almost without artisans. Denise Paulme had been attracted to the rice people by the famous stone statuettes called *kissi*; she soon learned that these are not their work. They have no masks, no wood sculptures. Iron work is rudimentary, there is no blacksmith caste. There is nothing that might be called political organization. Africa has the most varied systems, from simple family lineage to the most highly organized States. Here, each village is autonomous, turned in upon itself, far from roads, protected by its altitude and by the concealing forest. In the village, two or three family groups contain at most two hundred persons, directed by the eldest, priest of the family cult, with the aid of the other old people—gerontocracy, as is often the case in Africa. Compared to family lineage, the clan plays a minor role: exogamy and totemism are not clan but family matters. This particularism is also found in the religion.

Two attitudes in family life, which is both ordered and spontaneous, are constraint for the first-born, liberty for the younger ones. Might it not be this carefully maintained reserve toward the first that produces in the verbal exaggerations toward the others almost a bantering relationship? Simple affection is shown for the mother and the maternal side, toward whom there is no obligation. Feelings seem to be ambivalent toward the father and his side, who incarnate not only authority and

1. *Civilisations africaines* (Paris: Presses Universitaires, 1953), pp. 99-100.



security, but also functions and duties. Feelings vary according to the situation and the characters involved. Thanks to a sufficiently intimate acquaintance with individuals, the author is able to discriminate clearly between official rules and particular reactions. Under rather weighty constraining rules and often artificial harmony, personalities are discerned, opposing behaviors observed. Actions and words are circumspect in public, but a trained observer will be able to grasp the significant nuances.

Strange as it may seem, the woman expresses herself more freely than the man. Their relative situations, legally and in practice, do not correspond. In principle, the woman enjoys no high status. Come from outside, always feeling drawn toward the village of her birth, never completely integrated in the group, she is in return less a prisoner of the social milieu, which has not molded her from birth. This marginal situation is the mark of every patrilinear, patrilocal society. Only individual behavior varies from one such society to another; the Kissi woman shows marked independence. From this point of view, conjugal relationships are very revealing. Hatred for the husband seems almost the norm. In the case of abortion or stillbirth, the mother is automatically suspected of having wished the death of the child out of hatred for the father: "If it had lived, I could never have left my husband." Psychoanalysis has shown us identical cases in our societies, where the subconscious desire remains unspoken, unsuspected by the person involved. But among the Kissi, the woman is fully aware of it and formulates the wish to

herself, hoping thus to bring about its realization. Here we touch on the important point of cause and effect, the very basis of Kissi witchcraft; but first let us discuss their religion.

There are no deities except for one great solitary god "of impenetrable deafness"; the name Halla indicates his Moslem origin. Is this lack of a pantheon, always surprising to one more familiar with Asia, a result of the break with their own past? Did the Kissi lose their gods along with their historic memory? The author doesn't pose the question. The Kissi are not fetishists either, the word making little sense here since ancestors are their sole cult "gods." An elaborate religious system goes hand in hand with a political constitution; lacking them, the cult remains within the framework of a familial religion. This ensemble is a closed unit, formed of the dead and the living, where the supernatural retains a human appearance. For clarity's sake the author adopts a division between "ancestor and agrarian cult" and "secondary cults," but all is really determined by the dead. There is room in the cult only for them: ancestors, that is individuals who died at an advanced age, having passed through all stages of life before this supreme promotion; "special cases"—those struck by lightning or drowned, lepers, the first child lost by a couple—all these are held in reserve but never totally excluded, and turned toward in the gravest of circumstances, for example, in case of sexual lapses.<sup>2</sup> The ancestors are asked for a

2. Cf. Denise Paulme, "Fautes sexuelles et 'premiers morts,'" *Journal de Psychologie*, 1950.

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good harvest, rain, children, protection against witches. They assure the smooth functioning of society: oaths and ordeals are undertaken in their name. Divination itself, a forced vocation as among the Siberian *chamans*, comes from the dead who impose the gift of second sight on creatures of their choice. The cult materializes in numerous objects emanating from the ancestor or sanctified by direct or indirect contact with him. By patient inquiry, cross-examination, and penetrating analyses the author has been able to list and classify innumerable altars and local cult-objects, along with the purposes of each. Denise Paulme sees in this proliferation a sign of vitality, but the diversity may well be more apparent than real. Each village has its favorite cults and means of defense, each selects its own sacred spots, builds its own altars. Names change, take on different meanings. All this is superficial variation on the central theme of the ancestor.

The best pages of the book are those which reveal an unexpected aspect of witchcraft, less spectacular than the usual descriptions but in reality more disturbing. Here are the devourer of souls, susceptible of animal metamorphoses, the witches' Sabbath with ritual cannibalism. But side by side with this classic type of professionals, the Kissi recognize the occasional practitioner, the intentional sorcerer, also dangerous since intention gives rise to action. The Kissi hesitate to offend susceptibilities easily aroused by a gesture or a word which might be misinterpreted, likely to launch feelings of counter-hostility. The consequences of

minor grievances are thus incalculable! Relatives, more likely than anyone else to excite anger, rancor, etc., will be the first victims. The intention remains hidden and the word unspoken is all the more powerful. Secrecy provides resentment with both its force and its greatest danger, a two-edged sword which may be turned against him who wields it, like the Tupilek Eskimo devouring his own master for want of another enemy. The intention once revealed, only an avowal can save the guilty one, the work withheld kills him who withholds it. Thence the importance of confession, nullifying the effects of thought and at the same time halting all action against the responsible party. We encounter this utilitarian notion of confession, functioning automatically as a counter-poison, in other parts of the world; the Christians, also aware of the sin of intention, attached to confession moral values originally lacking in it. Among the Kissi, thought, like the confession which suppresses it, can determine its result automatically. Will is not even a necessary condition, since an unconscious desire, an involuntary feeling, an irrepressible movement already act automatically. No one is ever innocent, no one dares boast of "a good heart," and each feels threatened because he is himself guilty. Thus the relative indulgence which absolves itself is justified: within certain limits sorcery will be tolerated. We have therefore no reason to be surprised at this acceptance: a world without sorcery would be a world without sin. But this climate of inner insecurity is a serious block to the development of a people, despite the

ability to adapt which Denise Paulme recognizes among Africans in general.<sup>3</sup> Africa as a whole is not yet free from the great fear born of this confusion

between thought and realization which is called a characteristic of the infantile mind but of which many civilized adults carry the trace.

3. *Civilisations africaines*, p. 124.

### Notes on the Contributors

PAUL RADIN, who took his doctorate at Columbia University in 1910, has made invaluable contributions to the fields of anthropology and ethnology. He has taught at Cambridge University, England, and at Kenyon College and the Universities of Chicago, Fisk, and California, in the United States. He has also served as ethnologist for the Bureau of American Ethnology and the Geological Survey of Canada. Among his many published works are: *The Winnebago Indians* (1915); *El Folklore de Oaxaca* (1917); *Sources and Authenticity of the History of the Ancient Mexicans* (Berkeley, University of California Press, 1918); *Story of the American Indian* (New York, Boni & Liveright, 1927); *Primitive Man as Philosopher* (New York, Appleton, 1927); *Method and Theory of Ethnology* (New York, McGraw-Hill, 1933); *The Racial Myth*

(New York, McGraw-Hill, 1934); *Social Anthropology* (New York, McGraw-Hill, 1935); *Primitive Religion* (New York, Viking, 1937); *Road of Life and Death* (New York, Pantheon, 1945); *Winnebago Hero Cycles* (Baltimore, Md., Waverly Press, 1948); *Die religiöse Erfahrung der Naturvölker* (Zurich, Rhein Verlag, 1951); *African Folktales and Sculpture*, ed. (1952); *The World of Primitive Man* (New York, Schuman, 1953); *Der göttliche Schelm* (Zurich, Rhein Verlag, 1954). He has also written numerous papers on mythology, religion, and the linguistics of the North American Indians, and is at present studying the religion and literature of primitive peoples.

ERIC WEIL, who writes in this issue on "Good Sense or Philosophy," is Maître

de recherches of the Centre national de la Recherche scientifique. He has written a *Logique de la Philosophie* (Paris, 1950); *Hegel et l'Etat* (Paris, 1950); *Philosophie politique* (about to be released), and is a frequent contributor to the *Revue de Métaphysique et de Morale, Critique, Confluence*.

UBERTO PESTALOZZA, born in Milan in 1872, never left the university of his native city, which he served as Rector, and where for many years he held the chair of history of religions. At present vice-president of the Italian Society of the History of Religions and member of the committee of the International Association for the History of Religions, he is Italy's leading scholar in the field of study concerning the Mediterranean substrata of classical and oriental religions, which has always been his special interest. He has also written on Manichaeism, and has published a personal interpretation of the religion of St. Ambrose. Among his books are: *Pagine di Religione Mediterranea*, 2 vols. (Milan, 1942-45); *Religione Mediterranea, vecchi e nuovi Studi* (Milan, 1951); *Eterno Femminino Mediterraneo* (Venice, 1954).

ROGER CAILLOIS has been editor-in-chief of *Diogenes* since its inception, in 1952. He was born in Rheims in 1913 and demonstrates his broad interests in the fields of sociology, aesthetics, and belles lettres, in the following list of publications: *Procès intellectuel de l'Art*, ed. (Paris, Les Cahiers du Sud, 1935); *Le Mythe et l'Homme* (Paris, NRF, 1938); *La Communion des Forts* (Paris, 1945); *Les Impostures de la Poésie* (Paris, NRF,

1945); *Le Rocher de Sysiphe* (NRF, 1945); *Babel* (NRF, 1948); *Quatre Essais de Sociologie contemporaine* (Paris, Perrin, 1951); *Œuvres complètes de Montesquieu*, ed. (Paris, Gallimard).

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JACQUES NICOLLE, assistant at the Collège de France, is a member of a distinguished family of bacteriologists. His father, Maurice Nicolle, founded the Institute of Bacteriology of Constantinople, and his uncle, Charles Nicolle, recipient of the Nobel prize in medicine, established the Institut Pasteur de Tunis. He has written many works on stereochemistry and on the applications of symmetry to chemistry and biology, among them: *La Symétrie et ses Applications* (Preface by Louis de Broglie); *Paul Langevin* (Berlin, Aufbau Verlag, 1953); *Un Maître de l'Enquête scientifique: Louis Pasteur* (Paris, La Colombe, 1953); *La Symétrie dans la Nature et les Travaux des Hommes* (Paris, La Colombe, 1955).

CLAUDE DELMAS, born in 1920, began his career as a teacher of history and geography. Turning then in the direc-

### Notes on the Contributors

tion of journalistic pursuits, he has been editor-in-chief of the *Revue Française* and secretary general of *Synthèses*, political commentator in the daily paper, *Combat*, and French representative of the *Deutsche Woche*. Among his publications are: *Sur quelques procès relatifs aux*

*forêts du Lioran*; *La pensée de René Grousset*; *Frente al dramo del mundo moderno*; *El porvenir de Europa*; *Les perspectives de l'économie française*. Soon to appear are *Les conditions du destin français* and *Michelet et Problèmes géographiques de l'économie française*.

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